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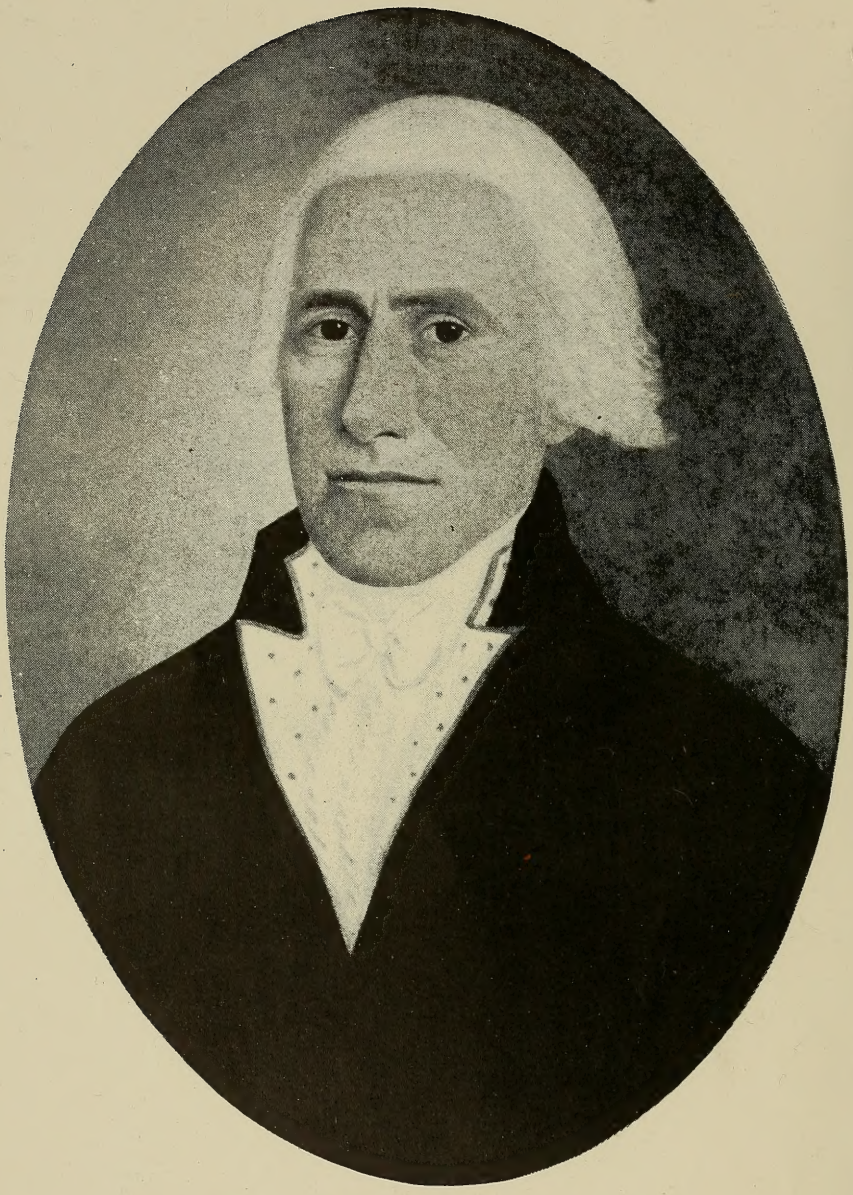
WITCH'S BREED

THE PEIRCE-NICHOLS FAMILY OF SALEM

BOOKS BY THE AUTHOR

Witch's Breed: The Peirce-Nichols Family of Salem
Children Are Poets
Creative Writing Through Letters
A House in Time
The Spirit of France
Life of Jesus in Woodcut
Water Colors — South of France, 1918



Captain Ichabod Nichols (in Russian Court Dress, c. 1770)

WITCH'S BREED

The Peirce-Nichols Family of Salem

BY

SUSAN NICHOLS PULSIFER

DRESSER, CHAPMAN & GRIMES
Cambridge, Massachusetts
[1967]

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1967

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DEDICATED TO —

The Peabody Museum and the Essex Institute of Salem
Which house and harbor for all time
The common heritage of Americans
and
The Living Word and Spirit of my Ancestors

WHILE THE EMPHASIS in this book is on the sea, and the maritime character and history of this family, starting with Captain Ichabod Nichols (1749-1839) who went to sea at nineteen, and after a short apprenticeship was in command of Derby ships, then of his own merchantmen and privateers — and four of whose sons went to sea at an early age following in their father's footsteps — after the decline of the family maritime enterprises in 1826, the characteristic progressive activity and courage of this family took other directions.

The maritime viewpoint and training of the father of this family, Captain Ichabod, was a discipline which I find reinforced the natural characteristics of his sons, grandsons and even his great-grandsons. These characacteristics were first exemplified in the fearlessness and the devotion to convictions of the persecuted "witch," Susanna Martin, and have been apparent from her day in many other members of this family and their later fields of activity.

Of Ichabod's seven sons who grew to manhood, the three who never went to sea were yet courageous and independent in other chosen fields of activity. So his namesake Ichabod (Tertius) was noted for his independent and liberal spirit in the development of Unitarianism in this country, and his son John Taylor Gilman Nichols, followed in his footsteps. Benjamin Ropes Nichols, Captain Ichabod's fourth son, became distinguished in historical and legal work and was appointed to arrange the records of Plymouth Colony in 17 volumes. The youngest son, David, an outstandingly brilliant scholar who died of consumption in his junior year at Harvard at the age of seventeen, shows perhaps the most astonishing and heart-breaking courage of all in his attitude of high hope and resignation in awaiting the fate which he knew was in store for him.

Captain Ichabod's son Henry who had gone to sea as his older brothers, John and George, at an early age, later pioneered in a different medium and direction; for some years after the family failure at home, Henry, a young widower, set out alone in the comparatively unknown West. He farmed and homesteaded in the prairie land of Illinois.

Captain Ichabod's grandsons, George Nichols, Jr., and Benjamin Peirce, Jr., became eminent in the literary and liberal university

thought of Cambridge and Harvard. Benjamin Peirce, Jr., was particularly revered in his day as perhaps the foremost mathematician of this country. Another grandson, John Henry Nichols, who has for his achievement in the Civil War years perhaps the longest chapter in this book, is distinguished notably for his almost fanatical devotion and patriotism and his pioneering humanitarian enterprises in the darkest of our country's history.

Finally Captain Ichabod's great-grandsons (the sons of Benjamin Peirce, Jr.) James Mills Peirce, Professor at Harvard, and Charles Sanders Peirce, at one time Professor at Johns Hopkins and for many years employed by the Geodetic Survey, have been termed foremost intellectuals of the American Nineteenth Century, pioneering variously in the realms of mathematics, astronomy and outer space, abstract science and philosophy.

The ability to withstand adversity, first seen in the "witch" Susanna Martin, is notably evident in the later generations of this family as its history unfolds. Thus a predominantly maritime family can at one and the same time be viewed as the Witch's Breed.

SUSAN NICHOLS PULSIFER

42 West 11th Street
New York City

May 1, 1967

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THIS BOOK OWES VERY MUCH not only as a matter of course to my ancestors, but to present members of my family, and to all friends and associates who have helped me in the completion of this labor of love.

First I would mention my brother, the late George Nichols III (1878-1950) of New York, who, on the death of our Cousin Charlotte Nichols in 1935 inherited as trustee the contents of the Peirce-Nichols House at 80 Federal Street, Salem and, sensing my especial interest in family history, assigned me the enviable task of reading and assorting the quantity of letters, diaries, ships' logs, deeds, etc., discovered in this house, home of the Peirce and Nichols families for over one hundred and fifty years.

The family documents were placed at my brother's direction with the Essex Institute and with the Peabody Museum of Salem on an indefinite loan; and the heads of both museums have for over thirty years allowed me to examine or to copy them whenever I so desired. To the museums' librarians and painstaking staffs I owe a debt of gratitude:

To the following officials of the Essex Institute: To Dean Fales, former Director in particular for his information as to the historic features at 80 Federal Street: to David Little, recently appointed Director, for continuing the long friendly relationship; to Mrs. Huldah Smith Payson, Curator; David Proper, Librarian; Mrs. Charles Potter, Reference Librarian; and Miss Mary Ritchie, Assistant Librarian; to Miss Bessom Harris, Office Manager and Mrs. Hugh Nelson, Museum Administrator; as also to Mr. Edward Harris and Mrs. M. K. Cunningham — for many favors and their help in securing the many illustrations which add so much to the value of this volume.

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The Cambridge Historical Society and its Secretary Mrs. George

Howe have been most generous and cooperative in furnishing detailed information as to the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House, home of George Nichols, Jr. of Salem and Cambridge, and in supplying photographs.

To Miss Hazelton of the New England Historic Genealogical Society for her aid and advice in genealogical research.

By permission of the Harvard College Library, through William Bond, Libraian, Houghton Library, I am grateful for quotations from the published and unpublished writings of Charles Sanders Peirce located there and in the Philosophy Library, and the Widener Library, as well as furnishing the picture of Charles Sanders Peirce.

The interest of my book is greatly enlivened by the considerable quotation from the court trial of the "witch" Susanna Martin in the files of the Essex Institute, and by the considerable quotation generously allowed by Marion L. Starkey from her scholarly and distinguished book *The Devil in Massachusetts,* as acknowledged below.

Appreciation is also expressed for the following permissions to quote excerpts from: *The Devil in Massachusetts* reprinted by permission of Collins-Knowlton-Wing; copyright 1949 by Marion L. Starkey. *Charles Sanders Peirce, Great American Thinkers' Series* by Thomas S. Knight, reprinted by permission of Washington Square Press, Inc. *Values In A Universe of Chance* by Philip P. Wiener, as well as his edition of the *Writings of Peirce,* reprinted by permission of Professor Wiener.

I also wish to acknowledge quotations from the article *Charles Sanders Peirce* by Murray G. Murphy, Volume 18, in Crowell-Collier Encyclopedia.

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Gratitude is owed to my nephew, Dr. George Nichols, Jr. (or IV) who at my brother's death inherited actual ownership of all the Salem family documents, and has allowed me unlimited quotation from those in the museums as in his own home, and has permitted copies of the portraits of Captain Ichabod and Captain George Nichols to be reproduced for this book.

I wish to thank especially those members of more distant branches of the family who have painstakingly furnished information, notably Mrs. Adelaide Nichols Baker, Mrs. Margaret Nichols Hardenbergh, and Henry Bowditch Stone; to Lawrence Van B. Nichols outstanding

gratitude for permission to quote at length from his manuscript *History of the Nichols Family of Salem, Massachusetts;* and to William Ichabod Nichols of New York for the reproduction of the fine portrait of his great-grandfather, the Reverend Ichabod Nichols of Portland, Maine; and to John Taylor Gilman Nichols of Boston for the likeness of his great-grandfather, Dr. George Henry Nichols, "the old-time country doctor," and for furnishing detailed family records of his branch. (Incidentally, a great debt is due the son of Dr. George H. Nichols, the late Willard Atherton Nichols, for much useful information in his short family history.)

I am grateful to my brother William B. Nichols for supplying notes on names and ratings of Nichols-owned ships down to the present day; also to my sister-in-law, Mrs. John Treadwell Nichols, for the picture of the silver tankard bearing the family coat-of-arms.

My gratitude is warm for the late Benjamin Peirce Ellis for the unrestricted gift, a copy of his manuscript *From A Cambridge Attic,* a collection made and edited by himself of Peirce family letters, the basis for one of the more romantic chapters in this book.

Deep thanks for the jacket design to Camilla, well-known New York artist, and herself a descendant of the New England heritage; also to William Condit of Denver, for the maritime design on the back cover, and to Valerie Tamplin of San Francisco for her painting of the author on the back flap of the jacket.

For the detailed and exacting work in presenting my book for publication, I wish to express gratitude to Mrs. Hazel McGoff, as also to Mrs. Sarah Babb and Mrs. Mattie Iwan.

Finally sincere appreciation goes to my publisher, George Atherton Chaffee, who has undertaken with characteristic dedication and enthusiasm to make available this record of an American family. And last but not least to Frances L. Chaffee, her husband's able assistant, and my own most painstaking editor. (By publishers' license they have consistently omitted the word Massachusetts, since the Salem of the witchcraft delusion and of the great maritime tradition could be in no other state.)

Gratefully to all these,

S.N.P.

FOREWORD

THE GOLDEN AGE OF SALEM'S maritime supremacy lasted roughly from 1770 until 1830 with interruptions caused by the Embargo and the War of 1812. The Embargo, resulting from England's fear of the rise of American supremacy on the sea and her desire to discourage the increasing entente between France and America, and the War of 1812, precipitated by the seizure of our ships and the impressment of American seamen, presaged the slow decline which began in the 30's. Thereafter Salem vessels were concentrating only where small ships were economically more profitable, such places as the Fiji, Zanzibar, and West African ports. Seldom, however, has there been a family which began its seafaring tradition in the 1770's and continued it down to the present day.

The later generations of the Nichols family have been devoted to yachting rather than commerce. George Nichols III, after many years of winning national and international fame in racing, was still adding to this record in international races sailed in the Baltic in 1939, where his son, George Nichols IV forecast later victories when at 17 he captained his father's boat, the six-meter *Goose,* which won for this country the Scandinavian Gold Cup, regarded in Europe as the championship match.

The names of the first Nichols vessels have been perpetuated in the family to this day. So the *Active,* a merchantman owned by Captain George Nichols (1778-1865) of Salem, had her namesake the 30-foot racing sloop of George Nichols III, and the yawl *Light-Horse III* is a family cruising boat in Long Island waters today. The fact that each generation of this family has produced sailors, whether for gain or avocation, shows a love of the sea and tradition that is in the blood and has rarely been emulated.

While this book was in production, William Blake Nichols, owner of the *Light-Horse III,* died on September 9, 1967, while sailing his boat in a race. He suffered a heart attack in setting the spinaker to win, and fell back exclaiming "I am short of breath!" His crew wished to turn back. "No — go on, go on!" were his last words. As a member of the family wrote, "His life seemed fulfilled in the best maritime tradition."

Mrs. Pulsifer has written with skill, understanding, appreciation and love about her family. Her technique is to let members of the family tell their own stories through their own letters, a form of biography that is eminently satisfying and which has been used many times for individuals. Its use for an entire family is infrequent. Here one sees the various brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, parents and children writing to each other their innermost thoughts and also their business and personal adventures. Sometimes they are only in another town, a short distance down the Atlantic seaboard from Salem, but other times they are in distant foreign waters. Wherever they are, one is struck by the family unity and solidarity. Mrs. Pulsifer has connected this correspondence with explanatory passages which illuminate the business methods of this distinguished family and keep the threads of their lives untangled for the readers.

Along with many other families in Salem, the Nicholses plowed the sea for their harvest and the harvest was bountiful. From modest beginnings they accumulated wealth and social position, marrying with others in like circumstances. Their particular memorial today is the great wooden masterpiece of Samuel McIntire at 80 Federal Street where the Peirce and Nichols families lived for generations. When the last Nichols moved from this mansion it was given to the Essex Institute, and it is preserved as one of the finest examples of McIntire's early period. We have here, then, a wondrously detailed record of the way a single family grew and flourished by a member of that family, and we have preserved in Salem the physical manifestation of its prosperity and solidarity.

It is not an easy task to take a lot of letters such as these and organize them into a coherent story, weaving them skillfully together with commentaries which successfully fill the gaps. The author has accomplished this task and, at the same time, enjoyed the many years that it has taken her to do so. This is the greatest tribute which one can make to the integrity of the material with which one is working.

ERNEST S. DODGE

Peabody Museum of Salem

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WITCH'S BREED
THE PEIRCE-NICHOLS FAMILY OF SALEM

Like leaves on trees the race of men is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.
Another race the following spring supplies,
They fall successive and, successive, rise.

— Homer, *The Iliad*

I

THE WITCH'S BREED — EARLY HISTORY

WE ARE BUT SHADOWS*. *We are not endowed with real life and all that seems most real about us is but the merest substance of a dream, till the heart be touched. That touch creates us; then we begin to be, thereby we are beings of reality and inheritors of eternity.*

Before I came here I had read of them, or of people like them in the histories of our country. I had heard them spoken of in the stories of my elders, but I had never really known or loved them until I came upon the words actually penned by their warm and living hands, conceived in their inmost hearts, treasured by those loved ones to whom they were written and finally laid, their writers gone, not in the quiet of the sheltered churchyard or the unknown depth of the ocean, but in the beautiful sanctuaries and the faithful care of the museums of Salem; so in this old city where they had their earthly being, I have had the enlightening experience of seeing and feeling my ancestors come alive. In all the tumult and destruction of our later day, in all the confusion of our spirit, these storehouses of the American and New England heritage house not only the souls of our ancestors, but our own essential spirit.

The museums of this old New England city of Salem, a city teeming with family connections, devotions, loves, tragedies or gossip, house for all time the undying letters, diaries and records of the highly personalized past. Here is the romantic love affair of two cousins, born for each other, born to found their great family of the future; there the devotion of two brothers separated by their calling of a life at sea, and longing for the safe home reunion which could never come. I may take in my hand the same gossamer frail bit of yellowed paper on which is written in pen-stroke clear and delicate the faith and love of a mother sending her son off to Harvard in 1824.

Here are no "ghosts" but the living, vibrant in spirit.

In a careful examination of two centuries of our Nichols and Peirce families, the personalities of the earlier generations stand out as the

*Nathaniel Hawthorne *Letters.*

fundamental ones. These men of the sea and of the soil and the wives who made their homes and bore their children through the late seventeenth century, the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth, appear to have more firm reality than those that come after and draw nearer to our own day. Perhaps because their lives are connected with the eternals, they have been subject to the blessings or the misfortunes of the land and the sea, the earth and its oceans. And these carpenters, shipbuilders, sea captains and merchants, the farmers, gardeners and heads of large families and homesteads led a simple life and one which might be and was reflected in clear, translucent views and opinions, and the elemental family emotions of love, joy, and grief in letters which the eighteenth century, in particular, knew how to write.

These early Americans must keep Log Books when they went to sea, the women at home kept diaries to record their pent-up emotions, or the most ordinary occurrences of their days which, however, afford precious reading to their absent ones on globe-circling voyages. But not only the matter of which these early Americans made their homely, emotional and easily understood "reports" to us of a later generation, but also the differing handwritings in which they reflected their life's experience all add up to the personality record which is left us.

It was a world bounded sometimes by but a few fences, by two or three blocks, or the surrounding walls of a snug ship's cabin, or a home-like Salem parlor or garden, and they could not realize that in so writing of their every day, their simple narrative could and would survive and grow to an almost omnipotent importance for later generations.

These personalities of several centuries past are still growing, and greatly enhanced by the light of today. I find them set and shining as gems in a beautiful old ring, or as a faded but accurate design which may still be traced on an ancient map or tapestry — the continuous chart of a continuing line, drawn on that everlasting, ever changing, evanescent substance, Time.

These are the men of this far line born of seafaring ancestors, so far as one can trace their names and dates, and undoubtedly far beyond. Their eyes are scrutinizing, accustomed to measuring distances at sea, discerning through their glass or telescope the oncoming storm, or measuring the duration of a calm. Apprehension for the physical uncertainty of their life and days, as well as scrutiny, is in their look.

There are the deep hard lines of endurance and of suffering borne to the end. But then as in a flash one comes on the harmonizing and most happily blending flash of humor.

These are women out of whose eyes may look the far-seeing, patient wisdom and wise, calculating prescience of the future, born from the concern and anxiety for the hazardous life of their young. These women seem ageless in contrast to their men whose backs may even appear bent and broken in their middle years. The women have known best how to grow old, how to survive, their bodies and features spare, longish and angular, having about them the resilient quality of steel which can spring back from any burden and does not break. These women are still found here and there, the "wise women" in whom flows the blood of the courageous witch, Susanna Martin of Amesbury.

And these two types — the man, the woman — have endured in this family to this day. Strangely, the more one reads of them, the far past generations and the "not so long past" seem to "run together." One notes the similar names used over and over again, but chiefly the leading characteristics and even the features and physiognomy fuse into a Composite Family Character.

I would "dedicate" this book also to those in whom there exists not only the blood of our Salem forebears, but their spirit; for these inheritors I hope and believe will know on reading these pages some thrill of a common conviction, will feel in themselves the warm flow of a common blood stream, and sense in some fleeting moments of reality that their faraway, yet ever near ancestors, are alive again in themselves, in the sensitive intuitions of women, in the courage of young men, as those who captained clipper ships at nineteen, in the fortitude to endure. For as we all have a common root, though we be scattered wide apart as the ends of the earth and though our own days and ways may never coincide, we are inevitably met in Time's mystery and significance.

I cannot feel that I am writing this book, for its actual content consists largely of the letters written by my family which, counting the court record of Susanna Martin and her actual words spoken at her trial for witchcraft in the year 1692, cover a period of almost three centuries. Besides the actual content consisting of "The Letter", it is the trend and spirit of these letters of widely differing family personalities and the eras in which they were written, which must give my book its spirit and direction. This book was written by my ancestors,

and only very secondarily edited by myself in the interest of their descendants; yet not only for their descendants but more truly for all of us who have evolved from a common past. For the past is most truly the most common denominator of the inheriting present.

In the construction of this family chronicle where the characters of each generation appear to come alive, as revealed in their individual letters, I am bound to quote Thomas Carlyle, "History is the essence of innumerable biographies."

Interest in one's ancestry appears to be an interest and attitude that develops by middle age and increases as one becomes older, We find the time to wonder Whence have we come? and also to ponder Where are we going? for it is not pleasing to most to consider that we are bound only to oblivion! In the casual examination of many interesting genealogies and families through their personal letters we have at least the comfort of discovering that personality certainly appears to survive the dry genealogical record.

In Heraldry the Nichols family is one of ancient origin. Nicolas De Albine was ancestor of all who bear the name, undoubtedly Norman French. A descendant, Sir Edward Nicol, said to have captured New Amsterdam from the Dutch, became the first English Governor in 1661 (For the Nichols Coat of Arms, see Illustration).

In England we find the name Nichols originally written Nicole, being the Norman French for Lincoln. Thus, in 1315 Edward III in the first volume Statutes at Large, page 177, same volume, page 213, same translation, page 201, Comte Nicole is translated in Latin Comitatus Lincoln. Same, page 404 in 1389, 13th Roch'd 3d, L'Evesquede Nicole, translated Bishop of Lincoln. Eglise de Notre Dame de Nicole is translated Church of our Lady in Lincoln. Citée de Nicole is translated City of Lincoln. See also Jacob's Law Library, title Nichols.

"Humor and play upon surnames loom large in heraldry, as play upon the name in a design such as that for the name and crest of Bowditch." (Where in this case the design is one of bows, a fess, and a ditch.) A motto may be added at the choice of the owner of the Arms.*

A crest long associated with the family of Nichols is that of Sergeant Francis Nichols whose ancestors are the Nichols of Ampthill.

*Charles Knowles Bolton, *Bolton's American Armory*

Francis of Ampthill, Bedford County, England was one of the Middle Temple, one of the Squires of the Bath.*

Crest — Tiger Segent

Arms — Azure: a fesse between 3 lions' heads. (The colors of a crest are important but cannot be reproduced here.)

Motto— Illi nunquam cedent.

This seal is found on a letter from Richard Nicolls, Governor of New York about 1665, to the Governor of Plymouth. This letter may be seen in the Boston Athenaeum. Richard was Governor of New York in 1665 and returned to England in 1667 .

"One of the most ancient coats of arms of the Nichol family of Great Britain which was used by the forebears of probably the majority of American bearers of the name, is described in heraldic terms as follows:

Arms — "Sable, three pheons"**

"A kindred line of the family is that of Nicholl of the Ham, County Glamorgen, Wales, descended from Iltyd Nicholl (1603-1671) third son of Iltyd Nicholl and his wife Cecil, daughter and heir of Edward Turberville.

"Rev. Illtyd Nicholl perpetuated the line etc."

Family of Nichols

Following this family of Nichols throughout its numerous generations it appears not so much a Family Tree as a Family Vine — its growth not so much tree-like in its disparate branches or limbs as in the extent or particular twist of the whole at any certain season; and this dependent in the different years or seasons of its growth and its direction on that edifice to which it clings, the man-made era, and the particular ways of Time through which this family moves. The Family Vine ever alive and growing throughout its long length, bears today its newest green shoots springing from the stout central trunk, which in turn is irrevocably rooted in its own soil, the soil of ancient France, of Normandy and Britain, its essential and deepest root, and that on which its growth is based even to this day.

So I prefer to think and speak of our Nichols Family Tree as a Family Vine. Here for one century after another there has developed a tough resilient growth, no towering of disparate soaring branches,

---

*Burke, *General Armory,* 1884

**The Media Research Bureau, Washington, D.C., *The Name and*

but a growth close to the earth, drawing its direct nourishment from the soil; progressing as one indestructible stem, adding every year and every century and generation size, endurance and unity to the one powerful ever-advancing low-lying trunk. This vine has trailed its great length even from Norman France, from ancient and rugged Wales, across two Seas to reach another continent and continue its strong and unified growth there, on the marshy shores of Southern Massachusetts, its hardy character flowering in the harsh sea winds.

This vine and these people have come from the sea to this land of the new world which borders it. They have come from a life of unknown adventures and hardships lived on another continent for thousands of years; but in the middle of our seventeenth century, here they are at the mouth of a great river. The sunny life-giving stream discovered flowing out toward them from the green of its banks and the dark strength of the forests beyond must have seemed a broad welcoming door opened wide to these weary voyagers from the restless seas.

It is easy to imagine these men from the sea slowly working their way to their new land up the broad river, poling their rough rafts in the midstream or grasping the overhanging branches along the banks, going wherever the life-giving stream might best lead them. So they came first of all to the marshes — the great salt marshes where their cattle would one day graze — to barren fields which their toil would turn to green and fecund meadow-land, and to the dense, dark and depressing forests to the West. But these they would shape again to sheltering houses, homes and barns, or raise them high as tall masts which would one day carry them back across the seas whence they had come, and even far beyond to lands of which they had never dreamed.

Is it not possible that such prophetic visions as these should have burgeoned even in the minds and brave imaginings of our first rugged, footsore and almost despairing ancestors, as they worked their way up this broad stream which we should one day know as the Merrimack River and the town and countryside of Amesbury?

The earliest grant of "Plantation Land" on the Merrimack was in 1639. And by the year 1640 the town of Amesbury* and the simple

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*Early in 1642 the town of Salisbury ordered that 30 families should remove to the west side of Pow-wow River (Amesbury) before May, 1645. This was followed by a dispute as to which town was to pay the taxes. Hoyt, *Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury.*

government of that town had its general layout and plan. Technically Amesbury was still a part of Salisbury, not having yet been granted its independent status. But it had its own government — a town meeting and a moderator. House lots were granted "around the green," a community green for the people's cattle. Gradually these lots spread more and more from the center, outside the circular road.

The town of Amesbury was incorporated and given its name in the year 1667.* The name had derived from the ancient town in England noted for its Druid Stone, near the Druidical Temple of Stonehenge, Cambres or Ambriosios, signifying immortal or annointed stones — The Abbey of Amesbury, one of the oldest religious houses in England, to which Guinevere fled for refuge on the discovery of her love for Lancelot. How the name of this ancient town and Abbey of England happened to be given to the town settled by some of the earliest colonists to arrive from England I have never heard explained in detail. Here were discovered no magic stones or grottoes similar to those from which the English town derived its name. The oldest buildings of which we have any record are an ancient sawmill and every quarter of the town had a watch-tower.

Thomas (Nichols) of Amesbury takes his place here as our first recorded American ancestor. Although it is probable that he was here as early as 1665, the first mention of him lists Thomas as a "Freeman of Salisbury", and as having a "meetinghouse seat and made townsman" in the year 1667, with a notation that he had been born in England twenty years before. (A Freeman could take part in town affairs, etc. by grant from the Commoners.) Also other interesting facts concerning Thomas are found in the records. It appears that he took the Oath of Allegiance in 1667, became a member of the Training Band in 1680 (Militia,) and was noted as an Amesbury "Snowshoe Man." The Snowshoe Men "have taken a vow of our arms, ammunition and snowshoes" — this probably a measure of defense in the snow season.

Our early ancestor of Amesbury married "Mary" in September 1655, the surname of his wife has not been ascertained, but most likely it was Molton.** Thomas had several children, one a son Thomas

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*Joseph Merrill, *The History of Amesbury and Merrimac*

**Thomas' second marriage was to Judith Hoag of Newburyport 1721; Hoyt, *Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury.*

born October 16, 1670 and married to Jane Jameson, the daughter of Esther (Martin) and John Jameson,* and so Susanna Martin's granddaughter. This second Thomas had a large family — ten children in all, six sons and four daughters. One of importance to our line was David, married to Hannah Gaskell of Salem, and lost at sea in 1756. In 1749 David became the father of Ichabod later to become Captain Ichabod Nichols of Salem.

But what was this world of Thomas and his contemporaries, his own family and near descendants, also my ancestors and those from whom I came? Did he ever go so far as Salem from his Amesbury farm and river landing? Did he perhaps meet on the road another walker and our ancestor, Susanna Martin, a simple neighbor of Amesbury destined to be persecuted for witchcraft and whose granddaughter the son of Thomas would marry?**

To know this world of Thomas I must take a longer route than any of the winding paths of ancient Amesbury, for I must follow with a firm will and patient comprehension the route to the past, in some ways more strange and difficult to tread than any route to the moon or beyond. I must half close my eyes to get a distant perspective; and now I can sense and almost see these and other distant shapes, gray and indistinct, yet men and women like ourselves traveling on foot or in rough oxcarts on the muddy roads, or bending to their work in the green of rolling fields, or cutting their way through the woodland. Again they are as vague and shadowy as cloud shapes on rolling pastureland in summer. These men and women are indistinct, yet awesomely authentic; they are distant and inconsequential, and yet they are those from whom I came, and who have made and shaped with their roughened hands the world I see clearly around me at this moment. They have made me what I am, and they are still making me; I feel, if I do not see them all about.

In the year 1667 Amesbury obtained its two principal wishes; it got both Township and a Minister. The town was divided into wards "for convence" of setting watches as has been noted. And equally important for its life, it obtained a church. "In this little hipped-roof church, at the toll of bell, the old, middle aged and young quietly took

*John Jameson, a member of the "Training Band" was made a townsman in 1669.

**Joseph Merrill, *History of Amesbury and Merrimac.*

seats assigned them, and listened to the words of the quiet young Minister they had chosen. Outside, cows went peacefully on the green in the care of a community herdsman."*

Yet the thought and threat of the Indians was all about. Migratory tribes — the Naumkeags, caused much concern among the settlers. There are still remains of Indian settlements, notably mounds of oyster shells to be found in the marshlands today. The town of Amesbury, as other towns from Colchester to Salisbury (with the Wilderness to the West) had a ruling "that every towne p'rvide a sufficient place for retreat for their wives and children to repair to as likewise to keep safe the ammunition thereof". And other ruling "That all watches to be set at sunset at the beat of the drum and not be discharged till the sun rising". Able-bodied men rode to church each on his horse with his wife and children behind and his gun hung conveniently on the saddle, to be stacked with the firearms in the church on arrival. But how should the old or the infirm get to meeting? It was a problem for there were no carriages and no roads, only muddy paths through the underbrush or marshlands. In 1705 it was voted to "throw up a road through the Nichols land on condition he (Thomas Nichols) give the town a landing place six rods on the river."

Thomas Nichols with others, Quakers like himself, objected to being taxed for ringing the church bell and cleaning the church. It seems then that he did not attend there but probably met with other Friends for worship on Sunday.

A copy of a deed of our first-known American ancestor, Thomas Nichols reads as follows:

"Know all men by these presents yt I Thomas Nicholls Sen'r of ye Towne of Amesbury in ye County of Essex in ye Massachusetts Collony in New England, husbandman. Now know ye yt I ye said Thomas Nichols for and in consideration of several motives me thereunto moving — and more especially for a comfortable livlihood for myself and my now wife while we Both shall live in this world, do by these presents sell, make over and dispose of all my housing and land within

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*Joseph Merrill, *History of Amesbury and Merrimac*,

ye Towne of Amesbury unto my Two Sons, Thomas Nicholls and John Nicholls in manner and form following

"Signed Thomas Nicholls & a Seale

29th day of the 9th month 1703

Signed Sealed & D.D. In ye presence of us

"Jacob Merrill, Samuel Weed

William X Picssey his mark"

Thomas of Amesbury died in 1724, and we have some particulars of his will. "He left small sums of money (a few shillings) to his children who were grown up and married, and left all his real estate to his three youngest from one to seven years old, probably for the reason that they needed it, and that the others were able to support themselves. The will states that his daughter Mary should have yearly 10 bushels of apples from his estate if she or her husband would pick them."

David Nichols, son of Thomas II, had a sister Esther, an innholder, who married in 1723 (or 1724) a well-to-do farmer, Ichahod Colby of Amesbury. He "adopted" the eldest or next eldest son of David in order to help the parents with the cares of their young family. In 1749 when a younger son was born in the very year of Ichabod Colby's death, we find the father David naming his child Ichabod out of gratitude and remembrance of the family benefactor. Esther (Nichols) Colby, left a widow, "carried on a famous inn, to which the town officers and others were wont to resort, and business always seemed to go better after partaking of the widow's excellent flip."*

This little is known of Ichabod Colby** of Amesbury who, however, has a distinct importance for our family chronicle because from him comes the name, perhaps made most distinguished in the long line of Nichols, as ultimately inherited by Captain Ichabod Nichols of Salem.

Gradually as I twist the glass for a nearer focus, the distant forms seem to evolve from the great vague shapes to what is more definite.

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*Joseph Merrill, *History of Amesbury and Merrimac.*

***Will of Ichabod Colby* Dated Dec. 8, 1748 Probated March 27, 1749 "I give and bequeath unto my Cousin (nephew) David Nichols that now lives with me my yoke of steers which I now have and also my gun."

There are actually voices and words written black on white, and this is what I read and see: The scene is a court-room, and a small, graying woman, alert and pert in gray dress and hood stands before the judge, her interrogator, magnificent in his judicial robes of the British Court of Law.

SUSANNA MARTENS CONDEMNED AND EXECUTED FOR WITCHCRAFT AT THE COURT OF SALEM IN THE YEAR 1692 AND HER DESCENDANTS SPEAK FOR THE FAMILY.

Susanna stands before the magistrates and her accusers as the girls whom in the superstitions of this day are supposed to have been "bewitched" by the "witch" are brought before her.

Magistrate — What do you say to this?
Susanna — I have no hand in Witchcraft.
Magistrate — What did you do? Did you confent thefe should be hurt?
Susanna — No never in my life.
Magistrate — What ails thefe people?
Susanna — I do not know.
Magistrate — But what do you think ails them?
Susanna — I do not defire to spend my judgment upon it.
Magistrate — Do you think they are Bewitcht?
Susanna — No I do not think they are.
Magistrate — Well tell us your thoughts about them?
Susanna — My thoughts are mine own when they are in, but when they are out they are an others.
Magistrate — You said their Mafter — Who do you think is their Master?
Susanna — If they be dealing in the black art, you may know as well as I.
Magistrate — What have you done towards the hurt of thefe?
Susanna — I have done nothing.
Magistrate — Why it is you, or your appearance.
Susanna — I cannot help it.
Magistrate — That may be your Mafter that hurt them.
Susanna — I desire to lead my life according to the word of God.
Magistrate — Is this according to the word of God?
Susanna — If I were such a person I would tell you the Truth.

(From Essex County Archives, Salem— Witchcraft Vol. 1 Page 59)

(Indictment v. Susanna Martin No. 1)
Anno Regis et Reginae Willm et Mariae, nunc Anglise de Quarto Essex fs.

The Jurors for our Sovereigne Lord & Lady the King and Queen prfents That Susanna Martin of Amfbury in the County of Efsex widow the Second Day of may in the forth year of the Reigns of our Sovereigne Lord and Lady William and Mary by the Grace of God of England Scottland: ffrance and Ireland King and Queen: Defenders of the faith & divers other Dayes and Times as well before as after certaine Deteftable arts, called witchcrafts & Sorceries qickedly and ffelonioufly hath vfed Practised & Exercifed at and within the Townefhip of Salem in the County of Efsex aforefaid . . . . . .

The Evidence against Susanna Martin
(Sarah Atkinson v. S. Martin)

Sarah Atkinson aged forty Eight years or thereabouts teftifieth thatt Some time in the Spring of the year about Eighteen years since Susanna Martin came vnto our houfe att Newbury from Amfbury in an Extraordinary dirty Seafon wn itt was not fitt ffor any pfon to travell She then came on foot, wn She came into our houfe I afked her whether She came ffrom Amfbury a ffot She Says She did I afked her how she could come in this time a ffott and bid my children make way ffor her to come to the fire to dry herselfe She replyed She was as dry as I was and turnd her Coats on Side, and could not pceive thatt the soule of her Shows were wett I was startled att ltt yt she could be soe dry ans told her thatt I should have been wett up to my knees if I should have come so ffar on ffoott she replyed She scorned to have a drabled tayle

Jurat in Curia
Sarah Atkinson

*"Susanna Martin was every inch a witch, bright of eye, salty of tongue, and the central figure of every marvelous event that had happened in Amesbury for going on three decades. She had established herself as community witch as far back as 1669, when she had been presented at court for bewitching a neighbor, tho' not, as it happened,

*Marion Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts,* Knopf, New York, 1949. Reprinted by permission of Collins-Knowlton-Wing. Copyright 1949 by Marion L. Starkey.

put on trial. Since then the wistful folk spirit of Essex Co. had focused itself on the neat bird-like figure of Susanna Martin. She had set the tone for her prosecution in early May when she came for her examination.

"An active body, she came in fresh and invigorated from the long ride up from Amesbury, and matrons looking over her dress could not see a pin out of place; there was a trimness about Susanna which was arresting. She wore her simple hood and scarf with an air, and carried herself pertly. She had emerged from this situation once before. She had been called a witch for so long that she had come to relish the distinction. So it happened that when the bewitched girls were brought in and went into their customary antics before her, she emitted a sound seldom heard in this grave court, she laughed out loud.

" 'Well may I laugh at such folly', she said when the magistrate reproved her.

" 'What do you think ails them?' they asked.

Susanna shrugged.

"As the trial progressed the judge knew better than to give rein to the tart tongue and irreverent wit of this witch, and instead heard what her neighbors had to say of her . . . "

"There was the tale of the enchanted Oxen of Salisbury Beach put out to fatten on the salt grass there, but who instead plunging into the water swam straight out to sea and were drowned . . . And the owner was left with a certain memory ringing in his ears, a spiteful echo. He identified it for himself as the voice of Susanna Martin who had once said to him in prophecy, 'Your oxen will never do you much service.' "

Then there was the tale of the "phantom puppies". Susanna owned the bitch and the litter, and John Kembal had contracted to buy a puppy. When he came, Susanna would not let him have his choice and was then "wroth" when he refused to buy at all. "I'll give you puppies enough," she cried after him, and thenceforth he claimed to be "haunted by black puppies" everywhere on the road, which, be it admitted, led most nights directly from the tavern to the home kitchen!

"In wicked weather she had once taken a notion to call on Sarah Atkinson in Newbury, going on foot all the way. She entered the kitchen neat as ever, even the soles of her feet being dry."

" 'I'd be wet to my knees if I'd come so far,' said Sarah.

" 'I scorn to have a drabbled tail', Susanna replied tartly."*

Other wonder tales concerned the *Shapes* assumed by Susanna.

"From all that we can learn after much research and careful consideration . . . Susanna was above the average in intellectual and moral courage, being an outspoken and fearless woman, and very far from being a hypocrite.

"She was a daughter of Richard North, one of the first settlers in Salisbury and was married to George Martin, as his second wife in 1646. He was a lot-layer of Amesbury; died about 1686, and their children — Richard, born 1647; George born 1648; and Esther born 1653 and married to John Jameson."* From this marriage comes the line of the wife of Thomas Nichols II.

In 1666 we find notation in the town records regarding George Martin and his wife Susanna as members of the church having their seats assigned them

"George Martin do enter his (plea) to the plasen of wife in that seat."

"Good wyffe Martyn is to set in the 3 seete in the Soweth West side of the meeten house."**

And again we find that "George Martin, husband of Susanna, and so grandfather of Jane Jameson, the wife of Thomas Nichols II, was one of the 'humble immortals' who in 1653 stoutly and successfully maintained for the first time, the right of Petition for the subjects of the English Crown.†

Susanna was accused of witchcraft as early as 1660. In April of 1669 a suit of George Martin was brought vs. William Sargent for

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*Starkey, *Devil in Massachusetts.*

*Joseph Merrill, *History of Amesbury and Merrimac.*

**There were 42 seats as given by Merrill and probably a few more, including all the principal men and a few women; the list of 36 voters and Commoners at the incorporation of Amesbury in 1667. (Commoners were owners of all common or undivided land.) All the men in list of Commoners came to 50 and these were assigned meeting house seats in Amesbury meeting house July 1667. Thomas Nichols and George Martin were among these. Hoyt, *Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury.*

†Willard Atherton Nichols, *Genealogy.*

saying Martin's wife was a witch. The jury found her innocent, but the court "concurred not with the jury".

"At the time of her trial she was a widow, her husband having been dead six or seven years. Her children were all of age and management of her farm fell upon her. That she was a strong-minded woman, her examination as quoted in her own words in the Salem court record shows."*

Susanna's are the earliest recorded words of any of my Salem ancestors, in the entire collection of letters, documents and ship-logs now deposited in the Essex Institute and Peabody Museum of Salem. These are the brave words of my direct ancestor, Susanna Martin of Amesbury, Massachusetts, on trial for her life and witchcraft before the eminent Judge Corwin, and other magistrates at the Court of Salem in the year of 1692. By such and similar testimonies it happened that on Tuesday, July 19, 1692, Susanna Martin was hanged with five other women on Gallows Hill and "the bodies . . . were thrust into a shallow grave in a crevice of felsite." There is historical evidence that the body of at least one of these women, Rebecca Nourse, was secretly removed and given Christian burial, "this was the hour and the power of darkness when a son could not say where he had buried his mother." This execution practically marked the culmination of the frenzy which had begun to jeopardize even the rulers. Gov. Bradford's wife was soon afterwards accused and her husband's indignation and denial brought the end of it.**

"Let Goody Martin rest in peace,
I never knew her harm a fly,
And witch or not — God knows — not I?
I know who swore her life away;
And as God lives, I'd not condemn
An Indian dog on word of them."
From the *Witches Daughter* by Whittier

Denied any human and bodily habitation by Puritan procedure, and then by our American materialism and disbelief witches might appear to have ceased to be. Yet might it not be otherwise? Certainly witches must ever seem indigenous to this coast and this countryside, native to the lonely, barren marshland, home of fogs and vapors and

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*Hoyt, *Old Families of Salisbury and Amesbury.*
**Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts*

far sea sounds, a land which borrows its own moods and power from a power greater than itself, greater than the earth or than the waters under the earth — the sea beyond.

With this land, witches, as we have known them, have characteristics in common. Witches were for the most part, elderly and defenseless women and those convicted and hung were usually those who had the courage to deny the witchcraft hoax, and to aver their allegiance to God, as opposed to the Devil. These women were apt to be those who had attracted attention by some words of prophecy, some attractive as well as unattractive characteristic, particularly with the expression of thoughts at variance with the tenets of strict Puritanism.

By the authority of George L. Kittredge in his book *Witchcraft, . . .* "witches may be white or black — beneficent or malific, and it is of course only the latter that are hated and feared by the people at large; white witches who heal diseases and undo the spells of malignant sorcery are regarded as friends of mankind . . . but there is a tendency among theologians to include both sorts of witches under the same category."

Certainly it is not hard to believe that the witch-spirit might ride the mast-heads through whatever storms and gales, ever setting its own course by its own chart and instinct. In the end this course inevitably led back to the snug family parlor to tell of far adventure over the glowing coals or to sparkle and crackle in homely wisdom on the grate or to purr at length in comfortable gossip.

In the descendants of attractive, pert and courageous Susanna Martin, I discover this confident witch-spirit and salty-tongue or homely wisdom interwoven with the weird gray strands of family prophecy.

Susanna's voice is the earliest to sound authoritatively in the family record, as we have said. Yet there are authentic documents in the collection which lead us further back even than the discordant desperate voices of the witch trial. A small account book labeled in a family handwriting "Document of very great value" is the account book having belonged to and kept by John Leverett, Harvard's second president in the year 1684 when he was "tutor of Harvard College." The neat figures seem as clear today as when written. It is an odd reflection that this little book, in which the ink has not faded, was kept the years preceding by a decade the Witchcraft Trials in Salem, and kept moreover in the distinguished center of learning and enlighten-

ment at Harvard College, only a few miles from the courts of hysterical perverted procedure in the City of Salem.

But "the evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones," wrote William Shakespeare while "witches" were dying in a sad perversion of British thought and justice in the Colony across the seas. And these comparatively few brave women who refused to save their own lives by admitting to the truth of a hoax, and so at the cost of their lives finally re-established sanity in their time, have yet lived on in our country as a malignant legend used in story to frighten the childish and superstitious.

It strikes one a strange anomaly to find in the middle block of hustling colorful Washington Street of today the dark leaden plaque on the wall of the block opposite City Hall; a dark reminder of a dark past, it tells its terrible story. The bare facts in the few terse words of this plague are more distressing by far than the fanciful memories contained in the House of the Seven Gables around the corner, visited by the holiday thousands. For the plaque tells unashamedly the stark truth — a truth so cold one would expect it to be hidden away at least in historical text books and elusive court records, but here it is on the main Street of Salem:

NEARLY OPPOSITE THIS SPOT
STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET
A BUILDING DEVOTED FROM 1677 UNTIL 1718
TO MUNICIPAL AND JUDICIOUS USES
IN IT IN 1692
WERE TRIED AND CONDEMNED FOR WITCHCRAFT
MOST OF THE NINETEEN PERSONS
WHO SUFFERED DEATH ON THE GALLOWS
GILES COREY WAS HERE PUT TO TRIAL
ON THE SAME CHARGE AND REFUSING TO PLEAD
WAS TAKEN AWAY AND PRESSED TO DEATH
IN JANUARY, 1695, TWENTY-ONE PERSONS
WERE TRIED HERE FOR WITCHCRAFT
OF WHOM EIGHTEEN WERE ACQUITTED AND
THREE CONDEMNED BUT LATER SET FREE
TOGETHER WITH ABOUT 150 ACCUSED PERSONS
IN A GENERAL DELIVERY WHICH OCCURRED
IN MAY

From the time of Susanna's trial the family had been very silent as to words and documents. Apparently they were living a quiet, perhaps a recuperative life. At least from the year 1692 and Susanna's recorded statements I find no letters or diaries from the hand of the family. Thomas II, husband of Jane Jameson, granddaughter of Susanna, has left no signed letter, but he did leave wills signing his name Thomas Nicholls as his autograph.

Thomas in turn had a son David born in Amesbury in the year 1705 who became blacksmith and settled in nearby Salem in pursuance of his calling in the year 1730. The following year in Salem David married Hannah Gaskell of an old Salem family. Hannah Gaskell was descended from the Southwicks of Salem and vicinity, and her forebears, as David's, had in their family history brave records of revolt from the ridigity of the accepted Puritanism and of persecution for acceptance of the more liberal Quaker faith.

In Hannah's family history or legend, Cassandra Southwick seems to occupy the place of Susanna Martin in David's direct heritage. Cassandra's family having given up their allegiance to the accepted Puritan church and joined the cult of Quakers were declared heretics by their church. When they refused to pay their regular church dues, they were ordered to sell the daughter of the family, the maiden Cassandra, into slavery, and the money collected for her sale was to be paid to the church to replace their debt. To carry out this cruel order the town officials or constables sought a captain who would convey Cassandra to the West Indies, that this ignominious sale might be accomplished. But history states that no shipmaster was found willing to carry out the brutal order. Beside the historic allusion to his authenticated tale we have a long and stirring poem, again from the pen of John Greenleaf Whittier, with reference to it, of which the final verse:

"Then to the stout sea captains the haughty sheriff said:
'Which of ye worthy seamen will take this Quaker maid?' "

But the captain's reply was:

" 'Pile my ship with bars of silver, pack with coins of Spanish gold
From keel-piece up to deck plank the roomage of her hold;
By the living God who made me, I would sooner in your Bay
Sink ship and crew and cargo than bear this child away.' "*

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*Bishop, G., *Sewall' History p.p. 225-6*

This case being represented to the General Court at Boston, that body issued an order which may be seen on the Court Records, bearing the signature of Edward Rawson, Secretary, by which the Treasurer of the County was "fully empowered to sell the said persons to any of the English Nation of Virginia or Barbadoes to answer said (Church) fines." An attempt was made to carry this order into execution, but it failed.

Laurence Southwick and his wife, Cassandra, renounced* their allegiance to the Puritan Church and joined the Quakers. For this they were inhumanly imprisoned, tortured and banished. Whittier, in "Banished from Massachusetts, 1660," has told of their sufferings:

So the gray Southwicks from a rainy sea
Saw, far and faint, the loom of land, and gave
With feeble voices thanks for friendly ground
Whereon to rest their weary feet, and found
A peaceful death-bed and a quiet grave
Where, ocean-walled, and wiser than his age,
The lord of Shelter scorned the bigot's rage.

They sought refuge on Shelter Island, where they both died in 1660, and their tombstone bears the following legend:

Laurence and Cassandra Southwick,
Despoiled, Imprisoned, Starved, Whipped, Banished,
Who fled here to die.

Of the actual story and of the individual descendants of Susanna I can best trace the details in picking up the family thread of the Nichols family of Amesbury with the marriage of Thomas II to Jane Jameson. In the Nichols Family Genealogies I find record of only one daughter having been born to Susanna and George Martin — Esther, born in 1653 and married in 1670 to John Jameson.*

Just what was Esther's life after her mother's execution we have no categorical evidence. But we do have actual records of other cases of most cruel persecution and implications of evil and witchcraft being passed on to the "witch's children," and that these were shunned in social gatherings. That this attitude on the part of the people of the Salem neighborhood was so in the cases of Susanna's daughter and

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*From Memorial Booklet on Willard Atherton Nichols.
*Willard Atherton Nichols, *Genealogy*

granddaughers we may certainly surmise. A poet who has concerned himself particularly with the romantic and the poetic inherent in scenes of American history, John Greenleaf Whittier, whose last years were spent in Amesbury, is said to have taken as model and heroine of his poem "The Witch's Daughter" a daughter of Susanna Martin, who at a harvesting is snubbed and reduced to tears by her gay young contemporaries, is finally sought out and championed by a prosperous and prominent young farmer who proposes marriage to her on the spot, and takes her home as his bride.

But whatever the historic details of this story, or that of a similar situation described by the poet Whittier in "The Witch of Wenham", does not seem too important; for the poet, as is the way of poets, was merely translating actual and local historic incidents to a universal truth. The child is followed and taunted by the reputation of the parent.

Another poem of Whittier, very similar in theme to "The Witch's Daughter" and owing no doubt to the same inspiration, was published in the *Salem Gazette* in 1877, and records in lyrical verse the encounter of evidently a most charming young "witch" with an officer of the law sent to bring her into court and justice:

> She charms him with her great blue eyes,
> She binds him with her hair;
> Oh, break the spell with holy words,
> Unbind him with a prayer!
> His face was hard with cruel fear.
> He grasped the maiden's hands:
> "Come with me unto Salem town
> For so the law commands."

And with this poet's inevitably happy ending:

> For spell and charm had power no more,
> The spectres ceased to roam,
> And scattered households knelt again
> Around the hearths of home.

We have no letters from David's pen and it is probable that he did not learn to write. We know that he was a blacksmith by trade and

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*Whittier, "The Witch of Wenham," Published *Salem Gazette,* 1877

that his boyhood and early youth were presumably spent in the farmlands of Amesbury where his grandfather, Thomas Nichols I, and his father, Thomas Nichols II, lived. When in 1749 a son was born to the couple David gave him the name Ichabod out of gratitude to the family's benefactor, Ichabod Colby, who died in the year of young Ichabod's birth.

When young Ichabod was barely eight years old his father David went out on a fishing expedition from which he never returned. We know nothing of this expedition except that most unfortunately it proved fatal to a devoted father of a large family. It is doubtful that David fished regularly for his family's support, or that he was ever the owner of any considerable fishing vessel, but "David Nichols occasionally went a-fishin" we read in a contemporary record. David died leaving "a life without reproach" according to the local records. In any case, he must have been a good and inspiring father, for young Ichabod at the time of his death only eight years old, wished to follow in his footsteps and was at a very early age consequently apprenticed by his mother to a blacksmith. His heart was set on learning his father's trade well. And he was distressed when his mother felt he should leave it for another calling, before he had perfected himself in blacksmithing. And, be it truly said, this was the only occupation which Ichabod ever took up in his long life in which he did not become a master. David had been a Quaker, as was his father before him, as also his wife Hannah. The son, Ichabod, became a Quaker in his youth also, and although he served in the Revolutionary Army, and in consequence for this, as well as his marriage to a non-Quaker, was "read out of meeting", he never joined the Episcopal Church of Salem until after his mother's death, out of deference to her and his father's more simple faith.

There is no direct word from David Nichols, a blacksmith who came to Salem in 1730 at twenty-five years of age, married and settled there. We know only that he was poor and with a large family of children; he had taken a wife of strong and fine character from one of the oldest families of Salem. Yet light focuses on him in vivid imagination for he was the first in a long line of distinguished seafarers and captains of the oncoming family. Although his own small fishing boat met with disaster on the rocky coast, or went under in a sudden lonely squall, it is certain that a grandson of Susanna Martin and a forebear of a long Nichols line of sailors died bravely and well.

In fine, I see David nobly companioned by all of these who came after, conquered, or were conquered by the sea, and the first of our seafaring line.

II

CAPTAIN ICHABOD NICHOLS

AFTER THE TERRIBLE YEARS of the Witchcraft hysteria and the witches' trial and executions, there ensued for the family a period of apparently uneventful serenity of seventy-five years or so up to the period when we hear the Revolutionary drums. But this was a time of building and the family vine grew — grew tough, strong, above all resilient, difficult to bind or guide, knowing how to draw its nourishment, its character and flavour from barren soil and the harsh wind over the salt marshes from the sea. So it should grow, adding this strong flavour of salt, stinging salt to its green verdure, until again it should turn seaward following on the wind's strong breath and so lay its long, tough length along the beachheads of Salem for years to come. Then there should be life along the waterfront once more as the family vine moved down from the meadows and the green town commons of Salisbury and Amesbury. Moved by the landsmen's axes the tallest trees of the once dark and menacing forest should move to the sea, until on this southerly coast of Salem they should burgeon as a forest of masts and the harbor be white with the blossoming of sails.

The period from 1692 until the years just prior to the American Revolution, when David's son Ichabod was coming into his full manhood and prominence, appears to have been a very quiet or at least unvocal period for this family. Yet, in following the later years from Ichabod's young manhood onward, this interim period may well be compared to that of a garden's planting and germination.

At the time of his father's death Ichabod was only seven years old, and at an early age his mother, a woman of great energy and force of character, apprenticed him to a blacksmith, and to his great regret in after-life he did not serve the full time of his minority, perhaps the only enterprise of his life in which he did not become a Master.*

Ichabod knew the sea and its price as a child of eight years when his much loved father David went out on a fishing expedition from which he did not return. Later George Ropes, Lydia's brother, was lost overboard from the Brig *Venus* in 1807 near the Straits of Gibralter.

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*Willard Atherton Nichols, *Genealogy*

Of Ichabod's four sons who followed the sea two, the eldest and the next youngest, were lost through illness contracted on their voyages and died in the Tropics far from home. Death at sea or from the sea was indeed a familiar thing to Ichabod his life long, and he must either accept it as a visitation from the Almighty or fail in his own supreme calling as a master merchant and sea-captain. And so his hard true line continued from the death of his father onward; but this hardy sea-faring breed ended with the lives of his sons.**

The truth as she saw it was the supreme challenge to the accused witch, Susanna Martin, ancestor of Ichabod and of the Southwicks of Hannah Gaskell's direct line (who suffered martyrdom and risked death for their Faith). So it appears that the men who went to sea in ships large and small from the home port of Salem, to sustain themselves and their families, accepted that very sea as their challenge. They sustained life from their voyages and they paid in life. And their losses in this utmost throe were heavy. But they did not complain, and the will of God was in that sea and its most bitter harassments.

Captain Ichabod Nichols was of stalwart Puritan descent, going back, as did his wife, to the earliest immigrants, including the Nichols, Jameson, Martin, North, Gaskell and Southwick families of Salem and vicinity. His immigrant ancestor Thomas Nichols of Amesbury, Massachusetts was a member of the Puritan church, but his son Thomas, having married into a Quaker family, joined that sect and Thomas' son David, the father of Captain Ichabod Nichols (born 1705, married to Hannah Gaskell in 1731) was a Quaker. Among Captain Ichabod Nichols' Quaker ancestors from whom he was directly descended were the Southwicks — Lawrence and Cassandra, his wife — very early residents of Salem, who were banished from the

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**Yet it is interesting to note that a goodly number of Ichabod's descendants have loved the sea and known how to face and conquer it in their own day. Since the loss of Ichabod's sons I discover no loss of a grandson, great grandson, or great, great grandson until the Great War of 1914-1918 when a number of Nichols descendants enrolled with high spirit in the United States Navy, and one, Shepley Nichols, great, great grandson of Ichabod, was lost, swept overboard from the destroyer on which he served. And Henry Nichols Ervin, Lieut. jg. U.S.N.R. 1918-1943, a great, great grandson of Ichabod was missing in action in the South Pacific, January 1943.

Colony in their old age on account of their religious belief, and their daughter Provided was put up at auction by the Puritan authorities to be sold into slavery to raise the dues to the Puritan church which she had refused to pay. This incident is a subject of a poem by Whittier, "Cassandra Southwick", (by mistake for Provided). He was also directly descended from Susanna Martin who fell a victim to the witchcraft delusion, to which reference is also made by Whittier in a poem, "The Witch's Daughter."*

Ichabod was a descendant before he became an ancestor. The family stature and character is seen to become definite and to build for almost two centuries that we may see and know it, before the middle of the eighteenth century. It takes very definite shape and form in Ichabod, this child born in their full strength and maturity of the middle years to David Nichols and his wife, Hannah Gaskell; and these descended directly in short, strong generations from stout Welsh stock — yet dared to progress in their own time and thought beyond the narrow Puritanism of their day, dared to find and follow the truth as they saw it, and to go on, always to continue even in their utter adversity, to love and lose as they sent cherished sons out to face all the dangers of the challenging seas.

Of this line came Ichabod, rising toward the end of the eighteenth century as certainly the "tallest" of the family stature, the great rock on which the advancing tide of family rose high; and not only he himself, but his stalwart sons follow in his footsteps — a large family of sons and daughters — going on in their own day to establish their work and their families. We have their very words, written plain in their letters, their diaries, their log and account books. Their thoughts, their observations, their hard, clear penstrokes left in these denote courage and ability. They are individual and they are of their day, yet most importantly their father Ichabod's stamp and seal is on them.

The witch's wise words have died away. They were the first but they were spoken almost a century before we come on an uninterrupted and authentic line of words, letters and documents in the family of Susanna's great, great grandson Ichabod Nichols of Salem. Yet, still

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*From an account written for the *Exeter News-Letter,* November 18, 1919, by Willard Atherton Nichols, genealogist of the Nichols Family, Redlands, California.

these long years after, her words appear to linger in the strong salty winds ever blowing lustily from the easterly marshes of Salisbury and from the high challenging seas at the beachheads of Salem. They linger in the spirit of her men, even in the first of her men who challenged the sea and lost. But now, listen! They are in the sound of the drums, they are in the "call of the drums" sounding above all the other sounds of the city, for young Captain Ichabod and his marching companion and brother-in-law, Jerathmiel Peirce, have heard and obeyed and followed. Listen to this more than words — for the young foot-soldiers as they rush out of the doors of their snug white houses following recklessly the march to join and strengthen General Washington's Army in Connecticut and far-away New Jersey.

So, stop to listen! to crane your neck out of the over-hanging windows of the white-painted or old brick houses of the hitherto quiet and decorous Salem street, for this is the roll of the drums, and the call of the drums is more than words!

Young Captain Ichabod together with his companion Jerathmiel answer the call. As members of a volunteer company of militia formed in Salem, the two young foot-soldiers are setting out on this November day of 1776 on the march from Salem. Their services were freely given, and it would seem that no record was entered upon the official files, because no money was paid therefor and consequently no receipt taken.

On November 14, 1776 was passed "An Act for providing a reinforcement to the American Army." This Act provided that one quarter part of all the able bodied male persons within the State from sixteen years and upward, not in actual military service (with certain exceptions) either by voluntary enlistment, lot or draft, should be appointed and held in readiness to march at a minute's warning to serve for a term not exceeding three months, within and for the defence of any of the United States when called out to reinforce the Continental Army by the General Court, or, in the recess thereof by the Council.*

There is another very old document never to be overlooked, although it is a small and faded book which may fit into a young

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*Willard Atherton Nichols, quoting from *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War,* Vol. I, xxiii.

soldier's vest pocket. It is the four-page diary of young Captain Ichabod Nichols on the march from Salem to New York almost two hundred years ago. In the few pages of this worn and shabby little book I get a strange sense of prophecy as most letters and diaries of one's past family are strongly evocative of this sense. Opening the covers of this little book I stand here at the door of a vast, sure future. I catch the very rhythm of the heavy tedious boots, the tread of the foot soldier of almost two centuries past; but it is even more than this tread which is recorded — it is the weird sure prophecy of the march of a family army to the South and West, a slow but courageous and steady march with the times and tide of each successive generation.

A Journal ("A March from Salem towards New York") Dec. 1776 gives a record of their leader, men in their company, the first stop at Lynn to dine on roast turkey, and the supper and night at Mrs. Gray's Inn in Boston. It gives the second day's march from Boston to Dedham and at its end Gray's Tavern at the "Sine of the Punch Bole." But even on his march the soldier Ichabod remained the sailor and captain. On another page of the little book he was figuring the accounts of the family ships. From the arrival at their destination the soldiers Ichabod and Jerathmiel wrote fond letters home to their young wives in Salem. These are still clear on the faded yellow paper and treasured today in the historic collections of the Salem Museum.

From the Genealogical Records of Willard Atherton Nichols: "Boston, Dec. 19, 1776. Arrived here from Salem on their way to join the Continental Army, the Company of Volunteers who turned out on receiving information from the Gen. Court that every fourth able bodied male inhabitant was either to be enlisted or drafted. They are as grand a Set of men as any without exception that have appeared under arms in this town since its Restoration. They are commanded by Ben Ward Esq."

(*New Hampshire Gazette,* Dec., 1776):

"Thursday last the militia of Salem were ordered to muster in order to draft every fourth man to re-inforce the Army to the Southward, when eighty-seven turned out volunteers among whom were gentlemen of the first character in the place."

And the *Continental Journal* and *Weekly Advertiser* of Boston, wrote on Dec. 19th that these "Marched through the town yesterday and made a most martial appearance."

Ichabod was evidently among these militia later stationed at Danbury, Connecticut to hold back the British landing at the Sound beach '5-20 miles distant aiming to draw off Washington's men's attion from New York. The British attempt failed and they were routed here in Connecticut. Ichabod's letter from the front to his wife at home:

"Danbury— January 9, 1777
Ever loving wife:

This is to inform you that our Company is Now Under Marching Orders for the Jersey Shore where we Do Expect to Joyne General Washington's Army. Our Company is All in good Health at Present, and Hope this will find you Injoying the Same Inestimable Blessing. Remember me to all our Friends in Salem. At the Keep of this I would desire you to desire Mr. Gray to make one Hundred pounds Lawful Money Insurance on the Sloop Reveng and the three first Prizes Provided it can be Maid for 30 or 35 percent. As to News you have it more Perticular in Salem than we have here. So not having acct. I remain your affectionate Husband.

Ichabod Nichols"

And Jereathmiel wrote from his encampment in New York:

"Scarsdale Manor Near White Plains
1777 Feb. 12th

Beloved Wyfe:

These are to Inform you of my Health with all my frinds By the Blessing of God and hope you and my family and all frinds Injoying the Same. Orders Rec'd yesterday for Morristown for marching to Joine Gen'l Washington, but Prevented by Reason of a Snow Storm, tomorrow Morning at Eight Clock we march for Morristown if weather permit, we expect to be about Six days marching the Distance. Nothing new Sence I wrote to you before. Excepting a few Light Horse with the Riders have Ben Kiled heare. I Conclude you have heard of the Success Gen'l Washington has met with at Sanders taking forty od Wagons Loaded with flower and Prisoners at Sanders wich Spirits up Soldiers very much. However, put not your Dependence on man But in the living God who is Able to Grant us our Request. I should be glad to hear from you and the Litle ones if you have the oppertunity.

Give my Respect to your hon parents and to all frinds. I remain your Beloved Husband, till Death.

Jerath'el Peirce

My Respect to Mr. Dutch and Wyfe."

Not many months later the young soldiers returned to Salem, their patriotic duty done. There followed the building years, years in which both young families were born, grew and flourished in the shadow of their parents' devoted care. Beautiful homes and houses were established.

But always through a faded old book which fitted into the vest pocket of Ichabod's army coat I see on the fly-leaf "The march from Salem to New York," and there is ever the sound of the drums... More and more I become conscious of the sound of the prophetical rhythmical years, years and men on the move Westward, as was that first march of the Revolutionary foot-soldiers of our family so long ago as the year 1776.

Today few of this large family still live in Salem; prophetically they have "marched" in their own time toward the South and West, following this or that movement or progress until today they are scattered far and wide over our vast land. The tramping feet and the years march in unison. Listen to the call of the drums!

If Ichabod and Jerathmiel had returned sooner than might perhaps have been expected they were most wisely patriotic in doing so, for certainly with their maritime experience they were able to serve their country far better on the sea, than on land. In 1770 at age 21 before Ichabod followed the "call of the drums," he had gone to sea and was put in command of one of Mr. Derby's ships. He made several successful voyages thereafter to China as master of the vessel. At this period he had earned the title of Captain, and as Captain Ichabod Nichols he was ever after known. Ichabod engaged not only in merchandising on the high seas but in privateering, considered by historians as a most important activity in freeing this country from England; a list of those ships in which Ichabod was actively interested, not only in trade but in privateering, is given by Willard Nichols in his *Genealogy*.

We find the following entries in the Naval Records of the American Revolution issued by the Library of Congress.

Letters of Marque Issued

1777 — Aug. 13 (p. 410)

Patty — Mass. Sloop — Guns 4 — Crew 16. Bonds $5000
Nathan Nichols Master
Bonders — Nathan Nichols, Salem
ICHABOD NICHOLS — Salem
Thomas Nichols — Somersworth — N. H.
Owners — Derby and Nichols — Salem.
Witnesses, Nathaniel Peabody
Ebernezer Thompson

1782 — June 14 (p. 456)
Scorpion — N. H. Brigantine — Guns 8 — Crew 15. Bond $20,000.
Owners — Ichabod Nichols, Portsmouth
and others

1781 — May 30 (p. 485)
Venus — N. H. Brigantine — Guns 4 — Crew 35. Bond $20,000.
Bonders — Henry More — Portsmouth
ICHABOD NICHOLS
Owners — Robert Parker — Portsmouth
ICHABOD NICHOLS

1782 — May 14 (p. 274)
Dolphin — N. H. Schooner — Guns 4 — Crew 25 — Bonds $20,000
Bonders — Nathaniel Folsom
ICHABOD NICHOLS.

From the letter written to his wife from Danbury we also know Cap. Ichabod Nichols was interested in a sloop *Revenge,* which was probably a "privateer," as he speaks of the 3 first prizes in connection with it. Among the Merchant-Vessels in which Ichabod was part owner (the custom being to divide ownership . . .) *Active* 1799, *Union* 1802, *Rambler* 1811, *Friendship* 1815, Brig *Factor* 1810, Schooners *Neptune* 1786, *Olive Branch* 1793, *Venus* 1804, and *Nautilus* 1812.

Although by far the greater number of Ichabod's letters are to his children and mirror a primary concern with their lives and well-being, two outstanding letters in this collection are definitely concerned with Ichabod himself and his own intense and personal pride; so the following addressed to Captain Elias Haskett Derby on whose ships Ichabod Nichols had proudly served as Captain on several difficult East Indian voyages.

"Letter of July 17, 1793, Portsmouth

. . . . ere long we must leave this world and appear without disguise at that solemn Tribunal where nothing will serve but a pure and rectified Conscience, and must there answer . . . against which, as yet, no human law has ever provided a Remedy, and there it may appear which of us has been really the ungrate- Notwithstanding all your assertions to my disadvantage. If I had not served you with integrity and to the best of my abilities whilst in your Service I should have been rong, and should have been the first that would have condemned it. But for the rectitude of my intentions and conduct of the last voyage, wherein you so much complained, I appeal to that Being to whom all worlds stands, to whom the motives of every secret in our Soles are distinctly known, who will not fail to reward us accordingly.

"I possably may obtain redress for those wrongs that I have received from you. Let me assure you that my motives for writing you are not to insult, or court your favor, but is to let you know that I am not insensible of the unreasonable, the injust and cruel treatment that I have received from you for Services that I do in the most solemn manner declare has been faithful and the best that my abilities was equal to, and as a further confirmation of it I appeal to those very gentlemen of your own appointing who settled the controversy between us, who have been heard to say that it appeared that you was not sensible of what I had done for you that voyage and that they was astonished at your conduct. Not withstanding the plain and honest manner with which I have addressed you.

Much injured friend,
I. N."

The quarrel between the distinguished Salem captains, Elias Haskett Derby and Ichabod Nichols as shown in the fore-going and several other letters written by the irate Captain Ichabod from his home in Portsmouth was apparently resolved most amicably four months later.

"Nov. 1793

"Elias H. Derby, Esq.
Sir:

I am informed by Mrs. Nichols hat she received a leter from you of the 12th inst. wherein you declare your kind disposition towards me and my family, and your wish to serve me and make them happy to the utmost of your power and that you wish to forget and forgive what-

ever has past that was disagreeable between us. Be Assured, Sir, that I am fully of the same sentiment with regard to you and yours to the utmost in my pow'r and that I wish to forget and forgive and to bury in Eternal Oblivion everything that has passed between us that served to irritate or to wound each other's feelings.

With due Respect I am Sir
your Sincere Friend and Humble Servant,
Ichabod Nichols"

(and underneath in his wife's handwriting)

"Sir:

Please to accept my kind acknowledgements for your good Will towards my family —

Lydia Nichols"

And it is to believe that Lydia settled the quarrel, as Ichabod's letters to Captain Derby of only two months or less before, were still excessively irate!

The following contains a striking likeness of Nathaniel Bowditch:

"Among the officers who sailed for Mr. Derby were Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch, Captains Ichabod & Jacob Nichols. Many of these who began as boys rose to be wealthy and influential merchants. They usually left school when about 15 and then served several years in Mr. Derby's Counting House. Here they received free instruction in the art of navigation. Each was then sent on several voyages as Captain's Clerk, and later would be promoted to a position as supercargo of some small vessel. After they had made a few trips to the West Indies Mr. Derby would then put them in charge of vessels for the West Indies, giving them such a large interest in the voyage that it was possible for them very soon to amass a sufficient sum of money to set up for themselves as merchants.

"The most noted person in Mr. Derby's employ was Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch. Mr. Derby was always his great friend and patron, and the famous mathematician made four long voyages in Derby ships. While at sea he used to employ his time by instructing the crew in navigation until all hands, even down to the cook, were proficient in the art. When comment was made on the proficiency of the crew under him Dr. Bowditch sat as modest as a maid and said not a word but held his slate pencil in his mouth."*

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*Robert Peabody, *Merchant Ventures of Old Salem*

We have no record of Ichabod Nichols ever having met Dr. Bowditch on his voyages. However, Ichabod's son Benjamin established a connection with the Bowditch family through the marriage of his daughter Mary to Ingersol Bowditch.

When on April 12, 1772 Ichabod married Lydia Ropes of Salem who was not of the Quaker faith he had put himself in the position of losing his connection with the Quakers, but it was not until Nov. 12, 1776, more than four years later, that he was formally read out of the Quaker Meeting together with his brothers, all of whom with him had been prominent in the armed activity against England represented by privateering.

"8:8m:1776. This meeting appoints Jeremiah Hacker and Josiah Southwick to Draw up papers of denial against Samuel Nichols, Ichabod Nichols, Nathan Nichols and Jonathan Nichols Disorderly conduct and have it at our next meeting for approbation."
"12:9m:1776: The above committee brought in their denial and it was approved."

Salem Quarterly Meeting Records
(NOTE: — This is a copy in Willard Nichols' handwriting.)

It is probable that this action was taken against Ichabod and his brothers for their activities in privateering as it was passed four years and seven months after his marriage outside of the established church, to Lydia Ropes in 1774. The following description of Ichabod's wife Lydia was written in the handwriting of her granddaughter Martha Nichols.

"In compliance with your request I endeavor to give you some account of my Grandmother Nichols. In personal appearance she was rather above the average height, well proportioned, rather stout but not by any means corpulent, very erect and remarkably dignified; a woman of remarkable executive ability as particularly manifested while residing in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. When her husband was absent at sea she received consignments of merchandise from him which required her to attend in person to the weighing, selling and delivering of the goods, although at the time she had a large family of young children. After her return to Salem about the year '92 or '93 she was a prominent member of the North Church under the Rev. Barnard, John Emery Abbott and Dr. Brazer and was for many years a manager

of the Children's Friend Society from its foundation and three of its children were bound to her until 18 years of age — Lydia English, Hannah Francis and Lydia Ann Petty; the last two named are now inmates of the Old Ladies' Home in Salem.

She was very much beloved and respected by every one, particularly by her grandchildren, but one must have seen her to appreciate the charm of her character."

With the inter-family marriages among the children of each family in the generation to come, the Peirce-Nichols family tie grew ever stronger.* Also there followed building not only of their families but in time of those beautiful and distinguished houses to be seen in Salem today.

Ichabod's second child George Nichols who was to follow in his father's footsteps and become as noted a captain as Ichabod, was born on July 4, 1778, in a brick house owned by Captain Derby, Ichabod's distinguished employer, and preserved today where it then stood, on the Custom House wharf at Salem. When George was but a year old in 1779 Ichabod moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and with his brother Nathan bought and inhabited for fourteen years one of Portsmouth's most distinguished houses known as the Wentworth Gardner house having been built by New Hampshire's Governor Wentworth for his son.

While in Portsmouth Ichabod engaged in the wholesale grocery business and also continued his sea-faring life as master of ships of which he was part owner. In one of them the *Light-Horse**, 226 tons, he brought into Salem in June, 1790, one of the most valuable cargoes landed up to that time — one of tea which paid in duties alone the sum of $27,109.18.

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*Ichabod Nichols to Lydia Ropes 1774, and Jerathmiel Peirce to Sarah Ropes 1772; George Nichols to Sally Peirce, 1801; Benjamin Peirce to Lydia Nichols, 1803.

*The bark *Light-Horse* originally the property of Elias Haskett Derby was the first American vessel to make an unbroken passage to Russia in the year 1783.

Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *America, Russia, Hemp and Napoleon*
Ohio State University Press, 1965

He found time when in Portsmouth to take up matters of public good. His name is found on petitions to the New Hampshire Legislature in 1784 and 1785, for repairs to highways and bridges leading into Portsmouth. At a town meeting of Portsmouth, 25 March 1783, Capt. Ichabod Nichols was elected a fire ward, and in 1790 he was chosen a member of the Federal Fire Society of Portsmouth which was founded in March, 1789, and is still in existence.

While residing here in Portsmouth for the next fourteen years Ichabod was most successful in his ventures, and he also embarked on numerous voyages. Concerning these we have his letters home to his wife of which we quote several most outstanding:

"On Board Ship *Light-Horse* May 18th, 1790, in the Lattitude 25½ North Longitude 53½ West from London.
"Lydia Nichols
Dear Wife

Be assured that it is with much pleasure that I take up my pen to write to you who is the nearest and dearest to me of all Tereasteal Objects — would inform you that I am in perfect good health with all hands on board except Caleb Cailey who is in a Consumtion. I hope that this may find you well with all our dear little flock whom Heaven knows I long to see, together with Mother, Brothers, Sisters and all friends in America. Please to remember me to John, George Lydia Ichabod Benjamin and the New Daughter and tell them that I often think of them and long to see them all. Thank John and George for their Letters that I have received from them from time to time. My Dear, I am but to sensable that your taks in my absents has been to Much for any one Woman to grapple with; heaven knows that I have often thought on you with anciety and wished you the best of heavens blessings which was all that I was able to do, but be of good Chear for I hope that you will be amply rewarded boath hear and hearafter by him who never fails to reward our good intentions.

Am sorry to inform you that Thomas Nichols departed this life the 5th of February Last in the straits of Sunday after a sevear Nervas Fevour for 25 days, he is the only man that we have lost sinc we left Salem. Our Ship is in very good order only the sails very dul indead. You must not look for us home until 10 or 15 Day after Captn Magee who takes this letter. I wrote to Brother Peirce to get 1000 Pounds L.

Money insurance for me in my letter by Captn Hodges who has undoubtedly arived before this, if he is not arived to have It done from this Place on the best terms he can to our Poart of Discharge in America. Please to inform John and George that I should have wrote to them but Captn Magee is waiting and tel them that I thank them for Letters and that it gives me much Pleasure to hear so favourable account of their learning; if we get home I think that our voyage will be good. You May expect us by the 15 or 18 of June but not much sooner. Tel Lydia that she need not fear that the New Daughter will make Pappa neglect her. Remember me to Every Body. Well, I remain, My Dearest, your most Loving Husband.

Ichabod Nichols

P. S. Don't forget to kiss all the children for me every day"

Beside this outstanding correspondence with his wife Lydia we find a number of interesting letters of business and family import from his friend and brother-in-law Jerathmiel Peirce and Sarah his wife:

"Salem Nov 13th 1787

Dear Sister,

I suppose before this you have Received the letters sent on by the Post last Monday, for which I give you great joy. I am sorry we are Disappointed of seeing Mr Nicholls as soon as we expected but hope it is all for the best. keep up good Spirits, the time will soon run away. I have the pleasure of sending by the bearer of this your piece of Cotton & Muzlin. I am very happy to hear of your health by the bearer of this & hope you still enjoy the same blessing: by the blessing of Providence myself and family are all in good health . . . I long to see you, hope I shall in due time, till when I must be content with hearing from you which I shall expect every opportunity. I wish you would remember me with respects and love to your Mother and Sister and make my Compliments to all Enquiring Friends. I Conclude wishing you every blessing.

yours loveing Sister

Sarah Peirce"

P. S. Mr. Peirce is at Boston but the Children join me in respect to their Aunt and love to their Cousins hoping to see their Papa and them as soon as is Convenient."

On December 2, 1788, Jerathmiel addressed his friend Ichabod as follows:

Cap. Ichabod Nichols
Isle France
Isle Bourbon
Or elsewhere in the East Indies
Dated Salem, Decbr 2, 1788
"Dear Sir:

I would inform you that Mrs Nichols was Safe a Bed last Wensday with a fine Daughter* and both are Verry well as you will See by . . . . Wish you give me leave to congratulate you.

I think in the Letter that I sent by Cap. Elkins I wrote you that I had made the Insurance according to your request, and would now inform you that now by your desire I have sent by Capn. Saunders pieces . . . [etc. the letter is concerned with minor details of shipping and merchandising].

. . . as to the fishing, it's to the generelle opinion there never was near the quantity of fish landed for the number of Vessels as there is, or has been this year so that we must conclude that it is in favor of Navigation.

"We have nothing very interesting that has transpired since you sail'd. Therefore that I conclude after I have informed you that myself and family together with all friends in Salem is as well as usual — and hope that you will find injoying the same Blessing. Allow me Dear Sir to inscribe myself your most Obedient, humble Servant.

Jrathm Peirce

and a business letter follows:

"Salem Feby 9 1789

"Dear Sir:

this my fifth will be handed you by Capt Magee. my first by Capt Elkins, my Second by Capt Webb, my third by Capt Hodges, & my fourth by Capt Coffen. you will find in the Inclos'd Package a Letter from Mrs Nichols which, I dare say, will be very Acceptable. By which you will Receive more Particular Accounts, from your family, that I am Able to give you. I have the Pleasure to Inform you, that all friends at Salem, Injoy much the Same State of health, as when you

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*This announcement undoubtedly refers to the birth of Charlotte, Ichabod's younger daughter who was to marry Charles Sanders of Salem, donater of Sanders Theatre to Harvard.

left them, Each of our two Brothers at Salem, Viz, Leach & Hardy, have an addition to their family, the former a Daughter & the Latter a Son, & are in good health. would farther Inform you, that your brother, Nathan, is Arrivd at the Cape Deverd Islands; and its Said doing Very well there. as to the News of day, I shall Refer you to the Inclosd papers for particulars. Excepting one Affair, which Happened About three weeks Ago, By some means the Excise Officer Recd Information of a Quantity of Raisins & wine, together with About 20 Chests of Bohea Tea. Cheafly the property of Mr Jno Norris, to the Amount of About one thousand pounds. was Seizd taken into Custody and will Undoubtedly be Condemned The first Instance of the kind that Ever happened hear Since the times of George the III & I hope will be the last. I expect, Sir one more Opportunity, By a Schr of Capt Crowninshield which Expects to Sail Very Soon; By which I Design to send you another Package, till when, Allow me, Dear Sir, to Subscribe Myself,

"Your Sincere Friend
& Humble Servt
Jerathll Peirce

"Capt Ichabod Nichols
P. S. Your Sister joins me, with Our Best Respects to you, wishing you a prosperous Voyage & Safe Return."

"Port Louis
Isle de France
May 16, 1789

"My dear Wife,

With pleasure I again take up my pen to write to you who is my nearest dearest and the center of all my wishes your kind favor of the 22d of August was handed me together with one from John and George informing me of your good health be assured that it afforded me the greatest pleasure of anything that I have met with since I left you — we have injoyed and still continue to injoy a very good state of health — May this find you, John, George, Lydia, Ichabod, Benjamin and all our family and our new-born Daughter enjoying the same inestimable blessing — the account of your having a Nother daughter I heard first by a letter from John to his uncle Peirce the 27th of November informing him that you got to bed on the 26th which Mr. Peirce enclosed to me by way of Captain Hodges and

another. I received from John of the 30th November informing me that you was cleverly but not able to write me at that time which letter I received by Captain Benjamin Crowninshield under cover from Mr. Peirce. We are at this time waiting for a fair wind to sail for Bonbay, . . . Isle de Cape to load Captain Elkin's ship and our own with cotton and from their proceed to China war I expect to lead with teas for Salem ware I hope with the blessings of God to be by the month of June 1790 the time seems long when we look forward but we must put on fortitude and Persovear and hope for the best and trust that the happy moment may arrive whin we shall meet again — you cannot hardly conceave the Sattisfaction I have in reading over the letters that I have received from you and our dear Boys. Please to tell them that I long to see them all and thank them for their letters and the love they have send me. Tell them at this time I cannot write them each a letter, but to hear that they are dutyful and behave well it affords me the greatest Plasure that is Possible — next to tell of seeing them I admire their letters. Tell them I have not, and shall not so long as I have my senses, forget one of them.

"I thank you my dear for kissing them for me. Pray kiss each one of them once a day for me, even John (14 years old at this time) George, Lydia, Ichabod, Benjamin and the little New Daughter and tell them that I long to see them all, and that I am in good health and all the ship's company. I have a letter from Brother Nathan, and am exceedingly happy to hear of this good fortune. I have seen several of the Dollars in this Island that he got up — what are you to do for wearwith to live on from this until the month of June 1790, but must trust you to Him to whom all worlds is dependent who never suffers his Creatures to want for any real good. I beg you, to mortgage or to sell all or anything that we have Rather than to want or any of ours.

"My Dear, I pity you from my very sole when I think what care you have upon you but keep your courage for wiles I live you have a friend that will bid defiance to Mallis and to Death itself to save you who is deserving of a better fate but enough so long as we are all this World to each other — this comes by the hands of Captain Collins that brought you the cofee last voyage — but unfortunately he goes by the way of france so that it is out of my power to send you anything by him but my love to you all. Please give my love respect to Mother, brothers and sisters and all inquiring friends — it is about 2 in the morning, and I have been writing all this night as I do send coppys

of all my letters two or three ways for fear that it may be necessary — with all tenderest I am my Dearest your most affectionate and loving Husband.

Ichabod Nichols

"P. S. Pray excuse my not writing to John and George and tell the dear boys that it is owing to the headache and want of time."

When Capt. Ichabod returned to Salem in 1793 he was in his middle life and occupied himself more and more with the affairs of the town at home, confining his ventures at sea to investments and business to be managed from the home office. He was a charter member of the East India Marine Society of Salem, founded in 1799, and his name can be seen on the framed Roster of the same in Salem.

Salem voted in 1798 to build by subscription a frigate of 32 guns for protection of commerce to be given to the United States Government under the Act of Congress of the 27th April, 1798. Capt. Ichabod subscribed $1,000 and was chosen a member of a committee to carry the vote into effect. This resulted in the building of the U. S. Frigate *Essex,* named in honor of the County of which Salem is the chief town.

After his return to Salem, Ichabod's three youngest sons were born, Henry in 1793, Joseph Peirce in 1795, and David in 1797. During these years the two eldest sons, George and John, both capable and mature boys, were starting out on their own in business or on the sea. The adventures of George and John, as well as of Ichabod's remaining children are told in another chapter, while herein we go on to Ichabod's own later years.

In the following sketch we have this "account of my grandfather, written by his granddaughter, Lydia R. Nichols."

"Mr. Ichabod Nichols' life, dictated by my father George Nichols.

"About the year 1808 he purchased a part of the Pickering estate, on the borders of the Salem turnpike and about a mile from the center of the town. It was a very hilly, rocky piece of land, of about 230 acres. His design from the first was to make of it a milk farm, an undertaking but very few people would have engaged in, but his great energy of character and fondness for agricultural pursuits, enabled him to overcome all obstacles, and after a few years of persevering industry he had the pleasure of looking upon a farm which was the wonder and astonishment of all who had known it before it came into his hands.

"My grandfather spent a great deal of time upon his farm and frequently walked up to it from his place of residence, a distance of a mile, two or three times a day. He was a very early riser and I have known him to walk up and back again by six o'clock to breakfast. He walked very rapidly always, in the latter years of his life carrying a cane. Anecdotes are told of gentlemen trying to keep pace with him but finding it very difficult they would sometimes give up in despair. When more than eighty years of age he would do more work than most men of forty.

"He kept from 35 to 40 cows, besides cattle and horses to do the work of the farm. His milk bills amounted to two or three thousand dollars annually. He set out a large orchard of apple trees, several hundred, which were in a bearing state at the time he sold the farm.

"On one occasion, when getting out stones for a wall, a large rock fell upon the forefinger of his right hand, bruising it so severely that amputation was soon found to be necessary. 'Well, doctor', he said, 'do it as soon as possible for I am in a great hurry to be at my farm', and upon this he held out his hand, not allowing anyone to support it, and in less than half an hour, the finger was off and dressed and he on his way walking, I believe as usual.

"My grandfather was said to be one of the best practical farmers in the county of Essex. He continued to hold this farm for about twenty five years, during which time his interest in it was unabated. After the death of my grandmother which occured four or five years before his own (really one year, 1838 — Ed.) his interest and energy failed somewhat. His health, however, continued almost unimpaired until within a fortnight of his death, and he was seldom confined to the house, even for a day. He died of old age, appearing to have no particular disease, at the age of ninety years and six weeks, on the 2nd of July, 1839.

"While interested in farming pursuits, he was also engaged in foreign commerce with my father and others, but took no active part in the business. An incident characteristic of my grandfather occurred when he must have been nearly or quite eighty years old. He owned several acres of grass land in North Salem and in the haying season he was in the habit of working there. One very hot day when the thermometer was nearly or quite a hundred my father missed my grandfather, and going over to his field he found him there hard at work and in a high state of perspiration. 'Sir,' said my father, 'I think

you do very wrong to be here this hot day.' He looked up quite disturbed. 'George, I never mean to rust out.' 'Oh no, Sir,' said my father, 'if you should never do another hour's work, people would not call you lazy!'

"My grandfather was always a great reader, and he retained his interest in reading until within a few years of his death, when his sight failed; after that, he took as much pleasure in having his friends read to him, listening to them many hours every day with anabated interest. He read, as he did everything else, with his whole soul. It is said that he read through Marshall's *Washington* every year, and the *Spectator* was a very favorite book of his. His feelings were very social, and continued so to the close of his life. He professed strong religious feelings, but made no public profession of his faith until within a few years of his death, when he joined the North Church under the charge of Rev. Dr. Brazer, but without being baptized."

III

SAGA OF THE SEA

Perhaps even before Ichabod was a descendant he was an ancestor, not only in the formal sense but a true patriarch in the most ancient and best tradition. His children's lives, their joys, their sorrows, their illnesses, their ultimate honor or their bitter defeat were Ichabod's own, even as these sons and daughters were his own flesh, blood and spirit. We find this feeling and this tradition echoed over and over again in his letters, first to his eldest and closest John, and in time to all of them. These letters are intense with devotion, with admonition, with detailed instruction for their conduct, and so for their success in life.

Ichabod and his seven sons and two daughters seem to form a unit, so close was his association with his children; and we may know him best as a personage, and his children as individuals, largely through their letters to their father and his to them. I give accounts of the children briefly as outlined by Willard Nichols, the family biographer, before going on to their individual places in the family chronicle.

Ichabod Nichols was born in Salem to David Nichols and his wife Hannah Gaskell Nichols in the year 1749, was married to Lydia Ropes in 1774 and their eleven children were as follows:

John Nichols (born in Salem July, 1776,* died at Point au Petre, Guadaloupe, June 8, 1798) seems to have been held in special affection by his father, and as his first-born to have taken much family and business responsibility. His voluminous letters home from his business in Philadelphia and his voyages to the West Indies and Europe are filled with loving solicitude for his parents and younger brothers and sisters in Salem, and with a particular anxiety and love for his just younger brother George Nichols on his far-flung voyages. John's life was clearly sacrificed to his devotion and loyalty to his ship's Captain Briggs by nursing him through an infectious fever which John contracted and of which he died — most ironically and sadly on the very

*December 26 according to Willard Nichols, but July in Salem *Gazette* obituary.

eve of a longed-for return to his parents in Salem. John was unmarried but "had an attachment" for a Miss Peters of Philadelphia, and the noble letter in which Ichabod informs her of John's death is one of the most touching in the collection.

George Nichols (born Salem July 4th, 1778, died Salem October 19, 1865) married his first cousin Sally Peirce (at 80 Federal Strtet) in November, 1801. He made a number of voyages to Europe and the Indies, several as captain of his ship. But he made only two voyages after his marriage, and retired from the sea apparently with great relief in 1804. Sally and George Nichols had eight children and descendants through the marriages of two of their sons, George Nichols, Jr. to Susan Farley Treadwell, and Charles Nichols to Amelia Ainsworth.

Lydia Nichols (born Portsmouth, N. H. January 3, 1781) married in 1803 her first cousin Benjamin Peirce. From this union, greatly favored and almost "arranged" by Lydia's father Ichabod, descends a most distinguished family in the annals of Harvard and in the intellectual life of this country. Lydia and Benjamin had four children, and from the marriage of Benjamin, Jr. and Sarah Mills, were born: Benjamin Peirce 3rd (Harvard 1829), world-famous mathematician and professor at Harvard; James Mills Peirce, astronomer and professor at Harvard; and Charles Sanders Peirce, who originated and developed the doctrine of philosophy of Pragmatism, thus greatly influencing William James.

Ichabod I died in infancy

Ichabod II (born in Portsmouth, N. H., 1784) often called "Tertius" because he was third of that name, married Dorothea Gilman, daughter of the Governor of New Hampshire. Ichabod was graduated with honors from Harvard at seventeen years old. After his graduation he studied for the ministry, and his first and almost life-long pastorate was at the First Unitarian Church in Portland Maine. Ichabod had two sons who became in turn distinguished in the church and in medicine.

Benjamin Ropes Nichols (born in 1786), whose daughter Lucy married Ingersoll Bowditch, so establishing a Nichols-Bowditch connection, and had a distinguished career as a lawyer in Boston.

Charlotte Nichols (born 1788) married Charles Sanders of an old Salem family. They had no children and Charles Sanders being a man

of considerable wealth left all of his fortune to Harvard University to build Sanders Theatre.

Henry Nichols (born 1791) died in infancy

Henry Nichols (born Salem 1793) married first Sarah Hardy whose death at the age of 29 years is noted in a letter of Ichabod. Henry "followed the sea" in his youth, and a small Bible printed and purchased in London and carried by him on his voyages is in the possession of Susan Pulsifer (also a Chinese export coffee or chocolate set initialed "H.S.N.", undoubtedly so marked in the fashion of the day with the initials of Henry and his first wife Sarah). There were no children by this marriage and after the death of Sarah, Henry made the decisive step of leaving the East to buy land on the "Prairie" in Illinois. From there he wrote voluminously to his nephew, John H. at home in Salem. Henry remained alone in Illinois for years, but after his return to Boston he remarried in 1850 a most cultivated woman, Anna Thayer, daughter of a Boston doctor. The letters of Henry pioneering on the prairie are worth a volume in themselves. Anna lived to a great age, and there are no descendants from her and Henry's apparently idyllic and late union.

Joseph Peirce Nichols (born Salem 1795, died Lima, Peru, 1823) was clearly named for the son of Jerathmiel, the life-long friend and connection of Ichabod, through marriages of their children; and it is one of those strange coincidences that the namesake of Joseph Peirce (who died of a fever in the West Indies in the year preceding the birth of Joseph Nichols) should have met with a similar fate — death in a far country in pursuance of his duty at sea.

David Nichols (born 1797) "died of consumption May 19, 1814, AE 17" This quotation noting the death of David, youngest of the family, is entered in the family Bible of George Nichols and Sally Peirce in the handwriting of David's older brother George. We know little of young David except that he was undoubtedly a brilliant boy to have entered the University at the same youthful age as his older brother Ichabod. That he was especially loved by his father we do know from the existence of a most solicitous and affectionate letter from Ichabod with advice concerning both his health and his studies at the University, and with an especially touching postscript begging that the boy "write often, once a week, if possible." The father felt no doubt a bit sad at having to send his youngest, at last, away from home.

There is a volume in the family collection into whose rough, brown leather cover there are indelibly burned these words:

"Ichabod Nichols, His book, — Being the Letters of
John Nichols to His Friends."

Inside this cover are contained many of the devoted letters of John, to his father, Ichabod, in John's absence from home 1793-1798, an absence difficult to bear both for him and his devoted father, and which terminated tragically in his youthful death away in the British West Indies. These letters are evidently copies of John's own, made in the fine scholarly hand of John's much younger brother Henry, who without doubt copied those letters which he considered the most meaningful and bound them in a rough but handsome manner, as a touching gift to his father, Ichabod.

It appears from these letters that his first-born, John, was the closest of all the six sons to Ichabod. John was the child of his early marriage, the child he left at home with his young wife when in November of 1776 he unhesitantly "followed the call of the drums" and marched away with the gallant little company from Salem to strengthen General Washington's stand in far-away Connecticut and New Jersey. John was still the baby and only child on his father's return to his wife in 1777, and one can picture the joyous reunion of this typical little family — baby John, even then of a notably affectionate disposition, holding out his arms in a loving gesture of welcome to the returned young soldier-father.

Between the oldest sons of Ichabod there existed a very strong bond. Perhaps it was that their very age made their relationship close, and set them apart; one feels this in the letters of their somewhat parallel lives.

John came into the world in 1776, and George was born in 1778 after the father's happy return from the War. The family lived in Salem for only one year at this time, and removed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1779, where the next child, Lydia, was born in 1781. Ichabod born in 1784, would already seem of quite a different age group, as we say today, from his older brothers John and George, and added to this Ichabod appears from the first to have been more of a scholar than a "doer and sailor." After Ichabod another sister and four younger brothers arrived in fairly rapid succession, and the

two oldest of the family seemed to acquire a responsible and almost paternal feeling toward their parents' younger children.

We have a letter from Ichabod in Salem to his son John in Portsmouth, where John, a responsible boy of fourteen was attending to the wholesale grocery business for his father. This letter is all about goods, ladings, etc., for Ichabod's boats in Salem. Evidently even in John's youthful years, he was the "business confidant" of his father, or at least his father felt certain that John would be interested and concerned in knowing the business reports. The father's trust and pride in his older sons is very evident. Feeling by the year 1793 that John was now able to leave home for business opportunity elsewhere, Ichabod wrote a letter to Messrs. Joseph Anthony & Sons in Philadelphia early in the year 1793:

" . . . respecting my sons, Would inform you that I have two, either of whom I think to be educated sufficient to go to live with a merchant. They have both good school education, the Eldest was nearly prepared to go to college, and since they have both been learning the Theory of Bookkeeping, and I hope that you will not find them wanting in capacity. The eldest was 16 years of age the 26th of last December, and has assisted me in a Grocery Store about 15 months. The other will be 15 if he lives till the 4th of July next, he has but lately come from school (Exeter). My friends advise me to send the Eldest first and to desire you to put him forward as you find him capable, and should you find him equal to take charge of Business before he was 21 for me to make such Considerations to release him and engage as would be agreeable to you; but, should it not be agreeable to take him on such terms, he shall stay till he is of age. Thus, you have their ages, and should you not find them just to your wishes, either in learning or other ways, please to inform them or me of it, and I will take them from you at the shortest notice.

I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant

Ichabod Nichols

Mrs. Nichols joins me with best Respects to your sister."

Nothing should stop time in its course; so when John had reached the age of seventeen years in April of 1793 he left home for employment in the Counting House of Messrs. Joseph Anthony & Sons in Philadelphia never to return home to Salem but for two most fleeting visits. Close on his departure, Ichabod followed him with a long and

characteristic letter of advice, admonition, and evident homesick longing from which I quote in part:

"... You are going from home and your future happiness and respectability depends on your first setting out in the world. The first thing I recommend is a sacred regard to integrity ... and should your opinion be asked, and you cannot consistently give it without risk of offense, request to be excused for the present as you want more time to consider of the subject ... Treat everyone with civility as their character and station in life demands, for I would endeavor to put it out of the power of an enemy to speak with truth to my disadvantage. I would even wish to ask the good-will of a dog. I would recommend that you never keep company with those that are below you, for by the company you keep you are known ... By all means endeavor to gain the good-will of Messrs. Anthony & Son, and whatever orders you may receive from them, endeavor first fully to understand them, and then to obey with cheerfulness, accuracy and dispatch ... I have it from Mr. Joseph Anthony's own mouth that it is not agreeable to him to have a lad appear backward in obeying his orders ... by all means live in friendship with every person in the counting house, and all others if possible, for without that you cannot be happy. Don't think yourself too good to do anything that Mr. Anthony orders you to do, which has been to the disadvantage of many.

It is likely that in the heat of Summer you may be complaining with headache, and your pulse will be full and quicker recommend a puke in the first stage of these complaints, which often prevents a fever, but you must apply to a doctor for that. Be sure to write me as soon as you get to Philadelphia and give me an account of your journey and how you like it, and you must write once in a fortnight after and give me a state of that market and I will inform you if there is anything that you can buy that will afford you a profit to send this way. If your time will permit I should recommend that you keep a Day Journal of the most important occurings, which you take down in your Pocket book and take it off evenings, I should recommend that you learn French if you can consistently, possibly in Winter if not before. Some master may give lessons in French evenings, but of this you will judge hereafter.

P. S. Sir I hope that you will excuse the liberty I have taken in writing you, when you consider that it is from no other motive than that of

humanity which a kind parent must naturally have for the good of an absent child that would be destitute of a friend to advise with."

And a few weeks later on 19th June, 1793, Ichabod was no doubt happy to be able to write to John:

"Messrs. Anthony informs me that you arrived at a time that they was much engaged with a press of Business that they have not had time to say much to you or to plan your introduction to the Counpting House. But that your Countenance was pleasing and Deportment agreeable, and that they had no Reason to doubt but your Conduct would be exemplary and give satisfaction . . . That they had two other young men in the Compting House, and they hope you will be a spur to each other in striving who shall Excell in Industry, accuracy and in pleasing manners . . . I am happy to hear that you are pleased with Messrs. Anthony & Son, and with Philadelphia in general, and that you so forget home as to be quite contented there."

For all the stern precepts which his letters to his children contain, Ichabod seems to have been a remarkably warm and loving parent, and his children, particularly this oldest son, wrote to him often, easily and fully, almost as a contemporary; in his letters to John, Ichabod has even at times a tone of easy friendship.

Soon after his arrival in Philadelphia John confesses somewhat humorously in a letter to his father, "I am the youngest and of course the underest . . . here." This humor is a somewhat rare sally for John, for his voluminous letters home to his father are for the most part only serious, devoted and often, dull. However, the shipping news, political opinions and remarkable strength of character and devotion make them well worth quoting in part and in context.

We may note throughout Ichabod's letters to his son that he appears to have had the utmost regard and admiration for both the firm and the individuals concerned therein at Messrs. Joseph Anthony & Son's, and wrote significantly to John:

"I am happy to hear you mention your observance of Lord Chesterfield's maxims towards Messrs. Anthony & Son, and to every other person, which you may rest assured will meet with my approbation . . . It gives me the greatest satisfaction to hear that you have thus far met with the approbation of Messrs. Anthony & Son, and the best advice

I can give you to secure their favor and esteem will be to act in a way to Merrit it by every possible means in your power."

While Ichabod's letters to his children were ever filled with parental advice and admonition, this was wisely tempered, particularly in his communication with his oldest, John, by such passages as the following:

"... for you may be sure that there is always something to be learned so long as you live which will be to your advantage if attended to. For the foregoing reasons alone, and that you may be advantaged, I mention them ... that you attend to those hints so far as you think them useful, and that you may be benefitted by them is the sincere wish, dear John, of your Sincere Friend and most affectionate Parent,

Ichabod Nichols"

And John poured out his devoted and homesick heart to his father; for Ichabod was before all a father to whom a son must write.

During the five years of his life away from home we find a constant exchange of letters between John, his father Ichabod in Salem, and his younger brother George, to whom John was particularly devoted. John's letters are indeed ever full of anxiety and solicitude for the safe voyages and return of this younger brother, whereas there is in all this chain of letters but one mention of anxiety for John's safety, at the appearance of the "virulent Fever Epidemic" in Philadelphia in August of 1794; and if this is the case, John "is to leave there." However, in John's subsequent letters he evidently allays his father's fears.

A letter of considerable importance to John in Philadelphia informs him of the birth of a much younger brother, Henry, on December 17th 1793. A letter to John dated 13 Jan 1794 "Would inform you that you have a brother born on the 17th ult and that Mama, the babe and all the rest of our family and friends in Salem are well as I hope this will find you."

"Dear Brother ... I am very happy to hear that you was in good health, as this now leaves Papa, Mama, Aunt Jane, and all brothers and sisters. I should have wrote before but I have been in the hospital having the Small Pox for three weeks since you left Salem ... Since that I have not had an opportunity to send that way, but, believe me, dear brother, I had not forgot. Brother Henry spent the day at our

house* yesterday and I assure you that I never see a finer child in my life than he is, and hope he will grow up to be respectable in the world, and a Blessing to his Parents, as well as his other Brothers and Sisters . . . I remain your loving and affectionate Brother.

George Nichols

"P. S. Please to write again the first opportunity, Mama, Aunt Jane, Lydia, Ichabod, Benjamin and Charlotte, join me with their love to you."

"To Mr. John Nichols, Philadelphia

"Salem, Jan. 28, 1794

"Dear John:

. . . I was happy to hear you was then well as this leave me Mama, George, Lydia, Ichabod, Benjamin, Charlotte and little Henry, together with Grandmama, all Uncles and Aunts and all our friends in Salem. Would inform you that we have had no news from the Schooners *Active, Neptune,* nor the *Olive Branch* since they left Salem. But I have no reason to think but they are all well. I received a letter from Capt. Tibbetts at Petersburg (St. Petersburg) date the 8th instant, when the ship was about half loaded wih wheat and flour — but her destination was not known to Capt. Tibbetts, but it was expected that she would discharge in New York. If so, I do expect to meet the ship there, as the time of her charter will be nearly up by the time she can be discharged. And it is possible that I may go as far as Philadelphia before I return home. My princable news for going to New York will be to procure a Freight, or to see the ship as may appear most to my advantage. Again I will ask Mr. Anthony to be pleased to give his opinion what the prospect for a Freight, or selling such a ship may be about the last of February or the first of March at Philadelphia, and you will write me accordingly. Capt. Tibbets writes me that he meets with trouble to get the ship's earnings from it. Because so fast as it comes due he has remitted me about 1400 Dollars since his arrival . . . There was about 1,000 more due when he wrote me last which he writes me must be paid before he would sign Bill of Lading for the Cargo — and I sincerely hope he will keep to his Resilutions. Inclosed

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*A letter written by a family member at this time reveals that Henry, born in 1793, was in February 1794 put in charge of a wet nurse, and lived for a time in her house.

I send you a draft — for Fifty Dollars to pay your Board, and you will procure one Barrel of the best Philadelphia Porter and two or three Small Pippin Trees — 2 or 3 best English Cherry Trees, and send them to me by Capt. Putnam of this town who will be at Philadelphia at the time this reaches you — with a load of New England Rum if you can procure the Trees, rap them up with matts, particularly the Roots, and have them put into the Vessel's Hold.

"... You will inform me if there is anything that would be acceptable to him (Mr. Anthony) from our part of the Continent (but this you must keep to yourself for the present)... I am particularly glad at this time to know that you are contented with your place at Philadelphia, and that your conduct has been such as to meet with approbation and to win the partiality of Mr. Anthony for you.... I am much pleased that you have called on Col. Pickering. Thank him kindly for his friendly offer of advice to you, also for his respects to Mama, myself and Family (Desires Mama's respects to Mrs. Pickering — Mrs. Anthony — Mrs. Mayburn, etc.)

Ichabod Nichols"

John's father wrote the following newsey letter:

From Father Ichabod to John in Philadelphia

Salem, 17 February, 1794

"... Ichabod (his son) Benjamin and Charlotte, are still at the hospital under enoculation for Small Pox. They are all broke out 3 or 4 days past, and are very well, so that they run out of the house and play as usual, particular George and Ichabod who have not ailed anything from the beginning. Little Henry is with a wet nurse about a mile from our house, and is also well, and is a fine little boy that begins to take notice and Play... I received a letter from Capn. Tibbetts last evening dated the 20th ultimo in the Lydia... he was then in Petersburg ready to sail for New York with wheat and flour, but he writes me it is uncertain whether he discharges in New York or proceeds to the north of Europe from there. I should have set out for New York myself, had the children been from the Hospital.

"... Be assured that I am and ever shall be ready to overlook the Follys and errors of an enemy, and you, my dear John, I can only pity and overlook, and desire from this time forward to bury in Eternal Oblivion all those Follys of youth which are past, and that you may improve by it in future good... Don't think by this that I wish you

instantly to become a Sage Philadelphian. No, quite otherwise, but you may take such innocent amusements as may serve to unbend the mind which will always be approved by gentlemen of respectability whose general characters speak that you wish to be above all this in Philadelphia."

This letter contains also further news and comment on Capt. Tibbetts:

"... Should he (Capt. Tibbetts) go into Europe, he must make a new agreement as I observed to him in a former letter, and that I expected nearly double for the use of the ship if they improved her after the Charter was up — upon which head Tibbetts is quite silent."

George also provides his brother with news of family and business.

"Salem 26th March 1794

"Dear Brother:

"Your favor of the 9th inst just came to hand by Papa for which I sincerely thank you. I am very happy to hear that you was then in good health, as this now leaves Papa, Mama, Aunt Jane and all Brothers & Sisters. I should have wrote you before this but I have been in the Hospital having the small Pox for three weeks since you left Salem, but Ichabod, Benja, Charlotte and Myself have been out from three to four Weeks. since that I have not had an opportunity to send that Way, but believe me, Dear Brother, I had not forgot you. Brother Harry spent the day to our house yesterday and I asure you that I never see a finer Child in my life than he is & hope he will grow up to be Respectable in the World and a Blessing to his Parents as well as his other Brothers & Sisters. I think, Dear Brother, that we cant be too thankful that we are Blest with so kind and Indulgent Parents whose delight is always to make their Children Happy & Respected in the World and are always bestowing upon us everything that we can wish to Make us Respectable, and it will be entirely our own faults if we do not conduct with Propriety when we are of an age Capable of Conducting so as to Meet the Approbation of all that May know us. If not owing in the least to the Neglect of our Parents & that the least recompence we ought to give them for their Trouble & attention is that we behave toward them and every Pearson else as to meet their Approbation & that I make no doubt, Dear Brother that it will be of the greatest advantage to you that could possible be bestowd upon you in living with Mr Anthony provided you strive to please him and we

make no doubt but that you will. I am very sorry to inform that Aunt Henfield departed this life the 4th Inst very Sudenly she eat her breakfast that morning as well as ever she did about an hour after she fell down on the floor & expired in a minute or two. the Schooner *Active* arived here from Auxcais having made a good voyage of more than £1000 free from charges. Capt Hodges received a Letter from Capt Townsend who was at Tobago selling boards & Staves from £10 to £11 pr m Currence and taking pay in Rum @ . . . per Gal and was going to Bonares if nothing happens shall expect to see her the Course of Next Week. The last account that we received from the *Neptune* was by Capt. Wood who was taken with the *Neptune* & two more American Vessels and as they was going down into Dominico for Trial Capt Wood ran off with his Vessel & Cargo and Supposes the other three will be condemned. Our Adventures has not done quite so well as the Cargo on account of her bringing home Coffee for us which Cost 10 Sous pr lb in the Auxcois but I suppose it will make from 50 to 60 pr Ct free from Charges. I have not divided the Coffee as yet but shall give you credit for the amount of the same. I thought it not best to divide it till Papa was at Leisure which will be in a day or two. I remain your loving & affectionate Brother.

George Nichols

P.S. Please to Write again the first
Opportunity. Mama, Aunt Jane, Lydia,
Ichabod, Benjamin & Charlotte Join me
with their love to you"

Early in 1794 Father Ichabod was also corresponding with his eldest son John in Philadelphia on the subject of his next eldest boy George. And in his more lenient and friendly mood he was consulting John as a contemporary. So he wrote from Salem:

"George seems desirous of going to sea at sixteen years. I hardly know what to advise him . . . You will give me your opinion what is best for him to do, whether to go to sea, or go to Philadelphia if a place presents. There is nothing within my power that I would not cheerfully do, that would most contribute to the happiness and respectability of my children which I hope you will always consider. Any hint from you as to what is best for them will be most kindly received by your friend.

I. N."

On the 9th of May, 1794, Ichabod wrote again to his son John on this subject:

"I think that George will finally consent to do whatever I may advise him to do, for he seems to be wavering in his own mind what may be best for him. How do *you* think — it would work for George to go to Mr. Anthony's?
P.S. Since writing the above Capt. Townsend is arrived in the Schooner *Olive Branch* after a passage of 35 days from Boneras (Buenos Ayres). The voyage is saving, but not so good as Capt. Hodges was in the *Active*. The schooner is loaded with salt and rum which I should be glad to know the price of at Philadelphia. We at present have it in contemplation of sending her to New York or to Philadelphia.

I. N."

There is no record of John's younger brother George having served any apprenticeship in accounting and merchandising by joining his brother John at Mr. Anthony's. Instead he seems to have decided in favor of going to sea, and from his many voyages, the first undertaken at the age of barely 18 years, until his retirement from the sea eight years later in 1804 he wrote many loving and interesting letters home. The most full and affectionate of these were written to his older brother John. But the sea and ships were burgeoning in young George's mind in these brief years of 1793-94, while his father and John were exchanging views of what his future should be; this is attested by the following letter written by George at home in Salem on October 9, 1794, to his brother John, in Philadelphia:

"Dear Brother,

It gives me pleasure to have an opportunity of writing a few lines to you to inform you of the good health of all our Friends in Salem, and hope this may find you enjoying the same blessing. Papa has undoubtedly informed you of the safe arrival of our Schooner *Dolphin* from Porluia in Guadaloupe her cargo was primarily clayed Sugars which Capt. Hodges and Sir sent to Boston in the Schooner. The sugar was sold at 10½ clear of duty coffee at 13 pound duties Included the whole at 60 days credit and having a pretty good offer for the Schooner they sold her for 200 pounds down and 400 pounds in 60 days which I think is pretty well. She has cleared about 300 pounds this voyage. We received a letter from Capt. George Hodges in the *Active* last

Monday dated at St. Lucia 23rd August, but he has been disappointed by the draggers in getting his return Cargo but he hoped to sail soon he had 50 molasses then aboard and 12 of Rum and had 15 empty casks after more molasses and a schooner after rum and we think it is very near time for him to be here, we received a Letter from Capt. Townsend in the *Olive Branch* at Fort Royal 19th August about 10 days since having had a very long passage out 43 days his orders were to proceed immediately for Dimirara by having light Winds he was not able to fetch. He had been to a number of Islands in possession of the English and was not permitted to sell any kind of salted provisions he had Sold his deck load but did not mention at what price. Unkle Joseph Ropes is to take the *Active* and Capt. Hodges the New Brig which will be launched the first of November she is not quite planked up to the Wale but they are getting her top timbers. I should have wrote you before but it is for want of an opportunity but I hope you will excuse it. I should be happy to receive a line from you every opportunity. Mama, Grandmama, Aunt Jane, Ichabod, Benjamin and Charlotte join me with their love and regards to you. Little brother goes finely and can almost go alone.

"Your ever loving and affectionate brother
"George Nichols

"P.S. Unkle Peirce has just received news from his Schooner *Westerly* G. Ropes expected at the Auxcays making a very good voyage"

At this period Jerathmiel Peirce, Benjamin's father, wrote a letter to John Nichols in Philadelphia, himself recommending his son Benjamin for employment at Mr. Anthony's:

" . . . You mentioned Mr. Anthony would wish to know what knowledge he had in writing, Arithmetic and Book-keeping. To the first of these I would answer he has a penmanship I have thought proper for him to copy from mine, as to arithmetic he has been thru most . . . he has had but small time for Book-Keeping in the regular way at present excepting for some small insight by our school-master. If the French language would be any advantage with Mr. Anthony, I suppose him to be acquainted either in reading or translating. As to his age, he will be sixteen years old next September.

"Brother George is learning French these three months past," the father added, this undoubtedly because the thought of "going to Sea" and

visits to foreign countries were already very much in mind and in view for George, John's two-years-younger brother.

But not all the letters received by John, away in Philadelphia, were from his family. We quote one here from a gay young friend back home:

"May 11, 1794

"Dear Jack —

I wrote you a few days before by Mr. Turnbull via New York which I suppose you long before this have received, however, tho I have but little to say to you, I never can nor shall let any opportunity slip without giving you a few lines, and hope you'll keep your same resolution . . . As for news of any kind we have but very little with us Philadelphia is a much better place for that commodity than Portsmouth . . . therefore shall expect a long letter from you by return of the Sloop. Capt. Satter in Mr. Jas Sheafe Brig arrived here last week in 48 days from Dartmouth. He tells us it was reported at Dartmouth at the time he sailed that Guernsey and Jersey were both taken by the French — a private letter a gentleman in town received by Satter confirmed it. Satter likewise says the people in England in general are very averse to a war with America and much against the present way of proceedings . . . one of our Portsmouth gentlemen talks of paying Philadelphia a visit, his name Monsieur Labbe. He formerly lived in the West Indies, has been in Portsmouth about 15 or 18 months . . . He is a generous, honest, good fellow . . . You may be acquainted with him. I am intimately and hope you will like him . . . Your Mr. Passamoir is now in Porsmouth. It is reported as fact that he is married which I believe is the case. He cuts out all our Portsmouth lads in dress. I was much surprised to see the alteration a few years had made in him.

"Your sincere and very humble servant
Nathl. Cutter"

John, absent in Philadelphia, was ever in the minds and hearts of his younger brothers in Salem who addressed him often in their affectionate letters. So his younger brother, Ichabod wrote to him when 11 years old:

"Dear brother,
I'm happy to hear you are well.
. . . I shall write you more particularly, but I suppose Papa will write you our welfare all that is of any consequence. We have had no news

of Brother George. Henry and Joseph are a couple of pretty little boys, full of their innocent tricks. We all long to see you, and I hope it will not be long before our wishes will be gratified.

I remain your loving brother
"Ichabod Nichols"

And that Brother John's affectionate nature yearned toward the baby brothers in his family of whom Ichabod wrote above, and whom John had never seen, we find in this loving note addressed to his Mother:

"Philadelphia, May 26, 1794

"My dear and honored Mama:
I will just ask this favor of you before I close this letter — that is to please give little Henry 3 kisses for me. I should be exceeding happy to see him."

When John Nichols at the age of eighteen left home to go into the Compting House of Mr. Anthony in Philadelphia he was of course followed by important letters of advice and admonition from his anxious father, Ichabod, who wrote in a letter of 9th May, 1794:

"Dear John,

This will be handed you by your uncle George Ropes who is bound on as far as Baltimore. This will serve to inform you that I am well with all the rest of our Family. I hope this will find you enjoying the same inestimable blessing . . . There is almost a total stagnation of business with us and when it will be better time only will unfold. I mentioned the reports that prevailed here of the Epidemic Feavour making its appearance again in Philadelphia which I hope is without foundation but at present we have our fears. I have not seen Uncle Peirce since I wrote you last nor heard his determination respecting Benjamin I think that you had best inform him that your uncle is fearful of sending him on account of the feavour and has not made up his mind fully on at present but will soon. As your uncle is wavering between two opinions after a place is procured for his son in consequence of his repeated applications from time to time it shows him to be trifling . . . and I am mortifyed beyond measure that I should be made a tool of to trifle with Mr. Anthony and I am really almost offended with him about it as he has not thought fit to call on me about it for seven or ten days . . . and if you don't here from me or Uncle Peirce in seven or ten days you had best inform Mr. Anthony

that he had best not miss taking a lad if one appeared that suited him as you thought it doubtful whether your uncle would send Benjamin or not . . . I requested your opinion what was best for George to do whether to go to Sea or to go to Philadelphia if a place presented for him. I am of opinion that he will do as well as he can let him go to Sea or live on Shore, as he is never better pleased than when he is fully employed which is not the case of all Lads of his age.

"I am dear John your Sincere Friend and most Affectionate Parent.

Ichabod Nichols"

Ichabod also kept his son in Philadelphia informed of news from the sea:*

"May 27, 1794

" . . . Your favor of 17 inst. came to hand since I wrote you last of Uncle George Ropes . . . I am sorry to inform you that Uncle Joseph Ropes has been so misfortunate that after being taken as he was at Martinoco was sent to Domenico, detained there 2 months, and put to the expense of 100 ? to stand trial, was acquitted and that 2 days after that he sails for Samoa (?) with his mate and one other hand only on board — that 3 days after he left Domenico about 110 leagues west of Tahi (?) the schooner sprang aleak that immersed so rapidly that within one hour before they was obliged to — the water had gained upon them 3½ feet, and was above the cabbin floor. They was 18 hours on the boat at the end of which time they met a schooner that took them and landed them in S. Eustace, and Uncle Joseph arrived in Salem last Sunday evening quite disheartened with fatigue and disappointment — He has saved a trifel of money say your and George's adventures which he layed out, and as much besides for the owners and purchasers, this he has returned after enacting as many as 7 severe trials and hardships as commonly falls to the lot of one within so short a time.

"By this we have a picture of some vicissitudes of Fortune attending Navigation — all that Capt. Hodges have received is £600 at this stroke is swept away all that we made in the *Active* the last voyage. Would inform you that Capt. Townsend sailed for New York the day that Uncle George Ropes left Salem where I hope he is arrived, but we have not heard from him. The *Active* is underway for the Island

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*This letter is owned by Mrs. John Baker of Westport, Connecticut.

of St. Lucca. She has a cargo on board, cost 1300£ Fish, beef, flour, etc. . . . Capt. Hodges and myself intend giving Uncle Joseph another vessel as soon as things appear more favorable than what they do at present.

" . . . The Ship *Lydia* is still at the wharf, but this day I expect Mr. Greenough with 8 men to take her to Portsmouth or to New York to load her to which place I am yet undetermined. I also am in treaty about selling her to a man in Boston. She will go from Salem this week, sold or not — Would inform you that Mama and Grandmama, brothers and sisters, Uncles and Aunts, join me with their best love and regards.

"I am, dear John, your best friend and parent,

Ichabod Nichols"

In another letter written on May 27, 1794, Ichabod discusses at length the indecision of Jerathmiel Peirce, concerning the matter of sending his son young Benjamin to Philadelphia where there have been most disquieting reports concerning the presence of the epidemic fever:

" . . . Uncle Peirce has been very much overcome with the loss of Couzen Joseph, (the death of his son Joseph of fever in the West Indies) that he has been undetermined on that account what to do with Benjamin; but last evening he was at our House and requested me to inform you that he should be very glad to have Mr. Anthony take his son, and that he would send him forward whenever he was wanted. So things stand at this time. I hope that you have not said anything to Mr. Anthony about Uncle being undetermined, as your Uncle assured me that it was trouble that kept him so long undetermined. If the place is still open for Benjamin, you will ask Mr. Anthony when it is likely that he would want Benjamin . . . "

Father Ichabod, ever mindful of the course and events of the life of his eldest son, John, in Philadelphia, sent him this typical letter of parental anxiety and advice in the year 1794 when John would have been just eighteen years old:

" . . . Let me assure you that my motive for writing you is purely intended for your good, who has seen the follys and dangers to which those of your age are exposed, and that lays concealed from the eyes of the inexperienced — as a pilot that has past and seen them, and as friend let me advise and not command you to endever as much as in

you lys to shun them — I think it a misfortune and an unhappiness for one of your age to enter into solemn treaty with anyone with whom they are to spend their lives when their views will be so very different from what they are at 16 or 17 years of age. For these reasons, and them alone, let me advise you for the present not to think of making up your mind in favour of SallyTowards (?) or anyone else, but when you may arrive at 21 or 22 years of age you may probably form an estimate how your standing may be in life, and I shall recommend that you endeavor to mate yourself to one that may be about your standing — for should you get one above you in fortune, she will probably cast such reflections as will wound your feelings, and should you get one much below you with Education, you may be mortifyed when you see her at the head of your table — to which her Education is not equal."

" . . . Notwithstanding what I have wrote, when you are of age, if you can fancy Sally before any other, you will most assuredly have my consent, on conditions that you will write her immediately that you are young at Present, not capable of judging who may suit you when you are of age, and request her not to depend on you, or to refuse an opportunity if offered, but have her embrace the first that offers her, as you may alter your mind, and shall take the same liberty, and after that drop corresponding with her until I see you again . . . "

In another letter of the same period Ichabod expresses his definite opinion against John's involvement in military service; this is undoubtedly due to a certain business disadvantage, but also, one would feel, to the strong Quaker leanings in Ichabod's family.

"Salem, October 22, 1794

"Dear John:

I am extremely happy to learn that you was in good health, and had given up all thought of going into the Army against the Pittsburg Insurgents, and that you appear to be duly sensible of the hasty steps you had taken, and of the faitle consequences it would have proved to you had you have gone. I consider it a most fortunate circumstance that Mr. Anthony interfered . . . a great favor . . . "

Though the correspondence of Ichabod's wife Lydia is very small she yet seems to have been, as one instinctively feels in all of the Ichabod family letters, a power behind the scenes. It is interesting to quote here her letter to her son John:

"Salem, September 1, 1794

"My dear Son,

I cannot think of letting so favoured an opportunity as the present slip without writing you. It is a great while my Son Since I have had pleasure to write or to receive a line from you. But I trust we are both fully Sensible that it is not for want of affection or regard for each other that we have not. I for my part am constantly engaged and I suppose it to be the Case with you. It makes me very happy to hear from time to time of your wellfare. This my dear you may rest assurred lies very near my heart, which I doubt not is the Case with you in regards to your Parents & Friends which I am happy to inform you are in good health. Surely my dear the favour of Heaven toward us in this respect demands our highest gratitude your Father I suppose is often informing you of whatever transpires here worth your notice, anything from me on that subject will be needless. Mrs. Storer has lately made me a visit & I have a few days since received a letter from her informing me of the death of her Cousin, Captn. Nathaniel Sherborn who died in Virginia. We have lately had the pleasure of Mr. Anthony's company here. I think him a very Sociable Agreeable man. Don't let it make you vain but he Says he often hears his Father speak much in your praise. He is pleased to say himself that he thinks you the best penman that has been in the Compting house at any time. This Certainly my dear John is suffitiant encouragement for you to persevere & endeavor by all means in your power to keep the good will of all those with whom you are connected which I doubt not will be the case. I am very glad the Shirts Suited I have two more ready to send the first opportunity. Your Grandmother, Aunts, Brothers & Sisters all join me in kind love to you. tender my best respects to all who may inquire after me. That the best of Heaven's blessings may constantly attend you is the earnest wish of your affectionate Mother

Lydia Nichols"

John expresses affectionate thought toward his Mother in this letter to his father:

" . . . My dear Mother must not forget the promise which she made me of favoring me with a line whenever she could spare the time, although I am apprehensive that will be seldom. Lydia, too, will frequently I trust improve a private hand, to indulge her brother with a short epistle, as well as all the little folks who have it in their power . . .

"... Upon paying off my tailors, shoemakers, wash-woman and other bills a few days since I found but a small surplus remained in my hands. I am therefore necessitated to solicit the favor of another remittance, when convenient, if you please . . . It will always, be assured, my dear father, afford me lively happiness to Receive a letter from your hands . . . the perusal of them is ever attended with peculiar delight, with the hope of soon seeing again your well-known signature, and my offers of the compliments of the season to you, Mama, and the whole charming circle of your family . . . I remain your affectionate and dutiful son."

On September 30th, 1794 Ichabod wrote again, no longer in the mood of asking advice, but giving it; there are admonitions on how to be a Chesterfieldian Gentleman:

"... Dear John I fear that you are not so attentive to your emproving your handwriting as I would wish. It is with that as with most other things. I would observe that whatever you do, do well, as says Lord Chesterfield . . . You must not expect to arrive at perfection in this Life but that you will endeaver to do as well as you can in every respect that you may reap the advantage."

Finally, early in the year 1795, less than two years after his beloved older brother had left home, George put his momentous decision into practice and went to sea on his first voyage. That this decision had been in his mind for some time, the following, from his autobiography, shows:

"At the close of the year 1793 my father removed to Salem, leaving me to settle the business assisted by my oldest brother . . . this done, on the third of December, I joined the family in Salem. Here my father connected himself in business with Capt. Benjamin Hodges. They purchased several small vessels and engaged in the West India trade. For more than a year I was employed as a clerk in their counting room. I felt at this time a strong desire to see the world and obtain some knowledge of the sea-faring life, so on the 28th of March, 1795, I sailed in the Bark *Essex* . . . with Capt. John Green for Copenhagen and St. Petersburg. I went as a passenger, and to do duty when able. Our passage out was extremely rough, and I was for a week or ten days very seasick, after which I was able to stand my regular watch. Capt G proved a very unsuitable person for a young man to sail with,

having no system on board his vessel. We arrived at Copenhagen after a passage of thirty-nine days, having met with no incidents worthy of note."*

After almost a year of sea-faring life we find in George's letters to his brother John in Philadelphia a rather depressing view of it. So on October 13th of 1795 George wrote to John:

". . . I think I like the sea-faring business much better than could be expected considering the difficulty we met upon the passage home on the 6th ult. We met with the misfortune to carry away our Rudder and was without anything to steer with excepting our cables, but was so fortunate as to having part of it again on the 22, which enabled us to steer tolerable well with the help of our cables, and arrived safe in Salem on the 8th inst. You will please write me a few lines as soon as you can make it convenient. You will excuse my bad writing as I was in a Hurry."

George continues the account in a letter soon after:

"Salem October 19, 1795

"My Dear Brother:

This serves to inform you that we arrived in this Place the 8th inst. after a rough passage from Copenhagen. To my great satisfaction found all our dear friends in Salem well excepting Grandmama and Brother Henry . . . excepting our dear Papa who was taken with the croup on Saturday last . . . but he is now entirely free from pain, and appears to be weaker and God grant that it may not return . . .

"Papa, Mama, Aunt Jane, Brothers and Sisters, join me with their kind love to you. I thought it my duty to address you with these few lines to inform you of my arrival, — whilst I remain your ever loving and affectionate Brother,

George Nichols"

Yet even under the unpleasing vicissitudes of his first trip, George states in his autobiography:

"Although I had had rough passages, and not the most agreeable companions, I still felt a strong desire to pursue a sea-faring life. I

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*Autobiography of George Nichols, *Salem Shipmaster and Merchant,* by Martha Nichols, published by the Salem Press Co. 1915

had been in my father's counting-room about six months when my father, with others, purchased a vessel to send to Manila, and appointed Capt. Enoch Swett, Master, and as he was very ignorant of business, I was appointed joint supercargo with him. We sailed from Salem on the 10th of May, 1796 in the Brig *Eunice,* a most unsuitable vessel for such a voyage being a very slow sailing vessel."

At this second sailing of George at the age of eighteen years, his father Ichabod wrote him a long letter of admonition and advice "on the Eve of Entering into the busy, Active World," since Ichabod evidently regarded this voyage as his son's true and professional entrance into the world of ships and business. In this light we may regard the letter as of definite importance:

"Salem, 7th May 1796

"Dear George,

You are now on the Eve of Entering into the busy Active World, on Business in which every Single Step you take will be attentively & strictly scrutinised into by Gentlemen of Information & Respectability on whose report to the World your character & Your Everything that ought to be Valued in this Life almost wholly depends therefore it is of the utmost importance that you set out right at first. So as to put it out of the Power of those Gentlemen (viz Capt. Dodge, Mr. Norris & Capt. Hodges) or even Malles itself to Speak with truth to your disadvantage, the first thing I recommend to you is to have a Sacred regard to integrity in all you may say or pretend and that you are just in all your dealings to the smallest might which I hope & believe is the principle well fixed with you already. Let me recommend that you are (During the Voyage) constantly Active & Attentive to the Business that is committed to your care that you are always explicit & particular in all your contracts & that you commit the same to writing. & have them witnessed & Signed by the parties which will serve as a guide to those who mean right & also bind those who mean otherwise. Don't be too hasty in determining on things in general, but first give yourself a little time to consider what will be the final Speed which you will be better able to judge of after making your calculations. This will prevent in a degree the dangers that generally result from hasty & precipitated conclusions — I recommend that you keep a daily journal of the Ship's way & of every occurence worthy of note during your absence. That no one thing is delivered or taken on board the

vessel without being noted by the Mate in the Log Book & that you enter the Same in your Day Book at the time of Delivery & if sold with the prices & manner & time of payment, that it may appear clear on your Book should any misfortune befall you that each one might have his just dues. You will also be particular in all your agreements as to the return cargo. Viz, Such as the quality of the goods you are to receive of which a sample had best be taken at the time, when you care to begin to receive them & when the whole shall be delivered on board or the Spot that may be agreed on also the forfeiture for an on compliance (which might be so much of Day Demurrage) when the money is to be paid for the goods & all of which had best be committed to writing & signed before witness by the partys with a forfeiture that will warrant a punctual compliance on both sides, The whole of which let the Mates be acquainted with as soon as is consistent for the benefit of all concerned, for it is well to consider that all men are mortal. Let me recommend that you are particular as to the quality of the Goods for the Return cargo & be sure that they are of the first quality of their Kind, which must be attended to as the profits of the Voyage wholly depends on their being well chosen. I will repeat it, you both must inspect them yourselves & take only such as is good in your judgment for should you have it with others to choose for you there would be a great risque of a Disappointment It is an old proverb & in my opinion true. Viz. That if you want a thing done you may send, but if you want it well done, you had best go do it yourself. I would also recommend that you never leave anything undone until tomorrow, that can conveniently & ought to be done this day. It will be well to consider that punctuality & Despatch is the life of Business. Be sure to close all accounts with every Person with whom you may have any dealings before you leave the Port & also if convenient make out your general accounts with the owners of the Brig, by which means you might discover any capital mistakes should there be such & have it in your Power to correct them before it is too late. You will write the owners by every opportunity that offers either by way of Europe or to any Port in America and Give every information in your power reflecting the voyage. Viz. the length of your Passage, a state of Markets & in what forwardness you are as to business & also how your vessel sails here. Cituation of the State of all hands on board in general, the time you expect to sail for home & when we may expect to see you. You will inform yourself at every Port you may be at of the Produce

there, its cost, the manner of obtaining it, how soon a cargo may be collected. What the duties are on the several exports & imports the prices & demands of imported articles what quantity may be wanted of each kind, the kinds that best suits that market & what is the most favorable season to be there for selling & buying & the best to make your passage in, as well as for procuring a return cargo & every other information that you may judge will hereafter be useful to yourself, or others all of which you will be sure to commit to writing on the spot from day to day as they occur. I shall recommend that Capt. Swett goes to an allowance as soon as you get to sea, & that he varys the Peoples Food every day in the Week which may easily be done by making a bill of fair for each day in the week & paisting it up for the cook to attend to & if strictly followed will be very productive to health, which ought to be one of the most important considerations of the voyage. Cleanliness is also a great Preservation to health which must be carefully attended to. Once a week at least, the whole loose clothes of the Cabin & the duds & Chests of the Stearage ought to be on deck & aired many times, the cabins & stearage well washed & dryed & a pistol or Musket fired off to destroy the stagnate air before the clothes are put below again. These things is what I always attended to during my long voyages & my crew was remarkable healthy. Should you at any time feel unwell, such as with the Head ache & your pulse fuller & quicker than usual you had best take a puke in the first stage of those complaints which serves to dim the stomach & often prevents a fever. I generally take about 3 grains Tarter Emetichat as a dose, desolved in six table spoonfuls of hot water & stir the same until it is cold, & then take one third of the whole, Should it not work in 30 minutes, take the remaining third, which will always work if you need a puke as soon as it works take freely of warm water, which serves to make you puke easy & to clean the stomach. Should it work too much you had best take a part of a glass of wine which will stop its violence, be sure that you are kept warm during the time of taking the puke otherwise you may be liable to a cramp in the stomach which is dangerous. I hope that Capt. Swett will not omit to have his waist clothes up before he enters the Straits of Bally, so as to prevent being surprised by the Malays or any one else that may attempt it & that all hands may be always on their guard by having their cannon & muskets loaded & Pikes at hand, also that a good look out is always kept by night & by day & the lead going when near Land, particularly so after

you enter the Straits of Bally until you may arrive at Manilla, as their Straits & so on the whole distance are not so well explored, there is constant danger from Rocks for which reason the Lead had better be continually going whenever the ship is underway; otherwise the consequences may be fatal to you all which you may find, when it is too late. Therefore I again recommend care and a good look out, as being the best guide & your only security. All that is required from anyone is that they do as well as they can, whoever does that Discharges his duty which I hope you will always endeavor by means you will secure the friendship & confidence of all that may know you & that pleasing approbation of your own conscience which of itself is an ample reward & is the first gift of Heaven.

"Dear George time will not admit at present to ad I must therefore refer you to my Instructions before sailing with Capt. Green for Sundry & perhaps important observations which I have omitted in this memorandum which you may read whenever your time will admit whatever you may find in either of those memorandums, that in your judgment is useful or worthy of imitation you will endeavor to follow but not otherwise. I will now recommend that you have nothing to expect in this life further than what you merrit & from your merit alone you may promise yourself anything within the bounds of Reason. The first & most important thing you have to attend to is to establish a respectable character which is in every young man's power, if they but set out right at first, of which be assured that I have not a single doubt but that you are determined in & that you consider that a lost reputation is hard to recover. Be sure to live in Friendship with Capt. Swett, let whatever may turn up as everything depends on a good understanding between you & with every other persons on board wherever there is harmony & a good understanding the time appears short which makes life agreeable & pleasant which ought to be fought for at Sea in particular on a long voyage. That the best of heavens blessings attend you this voyage & through life is the ardent wish of your sincere Friend and most affectionate Parent

Ichabod Nichols"

This characteristic letter of stern parental advice to young George must surely seem to the reader of today pompous or childish, and we have no record of how it impressed George at the age of eighteen years. But from his serious older brother John writing to his father at home, we have the following complimentary comment:

"I fully intended to have wrote you by this Vessel upon the subject of your admirable Letter of Instruction and advice to my Beloved brother as well as express'd fully how much I felt myself Indebted for your kind and parental Letter to me, . . . Indeed I think little more can be said of your Epistles than that they contain the best and most perfect principles of Moral Conduct possible to be laid down. Your instructions to George, I conceive to be so in such an eminent degree that I must delay returning them until I can transcribe a copy for my perusal."

As George's voyage continued to Batavia and India, Ichabod wrote a subsequent letter which he evidently felt needful:

"Dear George . . . I think it a duty as a parent to point out the many follies and vices that are most prevalent in India, to which every person that goes that way are Exposed, and which proves to be a curse and the misery of a large proportion of men that go there, that you may not be of that unhappy number, I would as a Pilot point out the rocks on which many suffer, they are many and various, but perhaps none that proves more fatal than that of drinking to excess, and that of following Lewd Women.

"There is no one thing that I should be so unwilling to trust myself in the indulgence of as to drink what is vulgarly called grogg . . . you will do well to drink water unless you are hot and swetting, then put very little spirit into the water as it helps perspiration at such times . . .

"I should advise that you make memorandum of all the important things that you may see during your absence. Particularly the amazing stone work and the mold near St. Petersburg, and endeavor to ascertain the length of it, and the dimentions of the large stone in the wall which are amazing — the hight of the steeples in the City, and account of the winding Stares going up into them. Make your memorandum in your pocketbook at the time you see them which you will take off into your Journal on board ship at your leisure, and all other remarks which you can take down in the same way which will serve to refresh your memory at an after period . . . "

In his autobiography George states:

"I left Batavia (India) on the 7th of February, 1797. This city is said to have been the most beautiful in the East Indies, with a popula-

tion perhaps of 1,000,000 . . . We remained at Table Bay about a week, and then sailed for home. Nothing worthy of note occured until we arrived within a few days of home, when we spoke a vessel and were informed that War had broken out between America and France, and that the French were capturing our vessels wherever they could find them. This intelligence made us feel very uneasy. Within a few days of this, very early one morning we saw a vessel which we took to be a French Privateer. Fortunately our vessel apeared to be well armed which made them cautious, and after maneuvering about us for some hours, we showed that we were prepared to fire into them, they hauled down their sails, and allowed us to pass* . . . We arrived in Salem between the 1st and 10th of August, 1797. This, my second voyage, was a pleasant one, and Capt. Swett was a kind, good-hearted man."

Shortly before this return of George to Salem, in the early spring of the year 1796, John left Philadelphia for his longest visit home to Salem. This was not a happy visit and gave John considerable anxiety. His father was gravely worried by his losses in shipping to the French, and thought of going to sea again. John himself was discouraged to find no business opportunities, as he would have preferred a counting-house job at home, and felt forced about making a decision to go to sea again. From his colorful trip back from Salem to Philadelphia we have this letter:

"Philadelphia, April 30, 1796.

"My dear Sir,

I have the pleasure to inform you of my arrival at this place, yesterday evening, after a journey of seven days in perfect health, although something fatigued. Our Route was quite variegated at Norwalk whence I wrote you of not finding a Packet, we proceeded to New London and there entered on board a Wood Shallop, who took us about 80 miles up the Sound; the wind then proving unfavorable, we landed and fortunately were able to reassume our seats again in the stage which took us to New York. Mr. John Sheafe and a Mr. Gray being of the party rendered quite agreeable. Immediately on my

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*In spite of this first fortunate adventure, a number of vessels in which Ichabod was interested fell prey to the French in the War.

arrival here I waited on Mr. Anthony at the Counting House as well as on Mr. Maybin, and all the rest appeared very happy to see me, the old gentleman particularly appears as pleasant as usual, not apparently dissatisfied with the length of my visit. I have taken my old quarters at Mr. Maybin's house to whom it appears agreeable. I have heard make no other strictures upon your letter, except that you appeared to scold him in it. In my absence I find they have employed a young man who acts in the capacity of Clerk and Book-keeper under-salary. From what I can learn they have not been crowded with business since I left, they are something more so now, which makes my arrival timely, from Mr. Anthony who probably will answer you soon you will gain particulars uneccesary for me to detail. Relative to what you wrote all I can say is that everything appears quite natural, and my Situation as pleasant as so recent a departure from home would lead one to expect, as have not yet waited upon any of the gentlemen from whom I have letters, that I should do today to be able to inform you my Reception next week. In the meantime I will endeavor to obtain from the Mint information wished for my Uncle Peirce, and and deposit Captain Dodge's gold to be assayed, of these I will write at the above-mentioned period. I now come to Politics, which its a pleasure to say have taken a most favorable turn, and will no doubt afford the People in your Quarter much Happiness and Relief from anxiety of mind. Yesterday the Question of appropriation for the Treaty was taken in the House of Representatives, and carried by one vote only (and that one late a Democrat). this was in a Committee of the whole — it will be taken up today in the House and no doubt go through. I freely congratulate you and all other principled men upon this Happy Change in the Political Horizon but for which we must soon have experienced the miseries of Domestic Discord and Internal Division. Mr. Goodhue will no doubt acquaint his constituents of this affair, but if not you may rely on the above and pursue your plans accordingly without apprehension. Please be pleased to present my Love and Respects in the warmest terms to Mama, Sisters and Brothers and all connections,

Your affectionate Son, in haste,

John Nichols.

I left the muzlin with Mr. Goodhue, he says it will sell well."

In a letter of May 6, 1796, John writes from Philadelphia:

"... You will doubtless be informed ere this gets to hand of Congress having voted appropriations for carrying the Treaty* into full effect to the great joy of the well-meaning and respectable Class of our Citizens. Their anxiety was Inconceivable for the fate of the Union during the short reign of Democratic Majority. Business experience, an almost universal stagnation, and the Mercantile Interest appeared resolved to suspend their Trade, until it was known whether they had a Government to protect them and it. Now, the face of things is again chang'd. Business has resum'd its wonted vigor, and nothing is talked of ... but the glorious political vigor gained by Reason and firmness, over stupid obstinacy and mean artifices. Every combat of this nature our Constitution sustains is calculated to give it energy and force, since it serves to rouse and keep alive its power which the good sense of a large Minority of our enlightened countrymen will ever induce them to support against the Machinations of its enemies. The favorable appearance of Political Matters will probably induce you to send off your Vessels, which I think you may venture upon without hesitation — for no Gale was ever succeeded by a greater calm, than now prevails among the opposite party since their late turbulent proceedings, in fact, they are all completely ashamed of themselves."

In this characteristic manner John frequently gives to his father his political and business analysis, and then expresses his intense family care and solicitude as when he continues:

"... my best wishes for success, my dear Father, attend all your undertakings, one, particularly claims a double interest in my prayers, where your prosperity unites with our mutual happiness in the safety and welfare of a beloved Child and Brother**; may the vessel he departs in be under Heaven's special care; may no unfriendly storms assail her, nothing impede her in her Voyage or be a hindrance to its safe performance in due time, crown'd with success. I should have been very happy to have receiv'd a Letter from him ere he sailed. Business alone, since my arrival has deprived me of the pleasure of penning a few lines to him."

Again on his return to Philadelphia John writes the following reassuring letter to his father:

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*Refers to effect of the Jay Treaty upon the West Indies trade.
**George's sailing on Brig *Eunice* from Salem, May 10, 1796.

"Philadelphia, August 13, 1796

"My Honored Father

. . . Have the pleasure to inform you no malignant disorder of whatever kind has made its appearance in our City this Season — quite as general health prevails as is usual in the summertime when there will always be more or less sickness and Deaths among so large a collection of people. A few Individuals have been carried off with bilious fevors, which in some symptoms resemble the yellow fever, but since a late spell of cold and rainy weather there are no new cases of it. Reports have prevailed here that some Towns at the Southward and also New York were visited with alarming Epidemics . . . should any change take place, I shall use the precaution timely of leaving the City, which you in so friendly a manner advise. You have herewith a list of my Expenses on the journey to Philadelphia* I have annexed a sketch of my expenditures and receipts which will show what money remains in my hands. The Amount thereof with about 80 Dollars for the emoluments in sales of some mackerel which I have no use for at the present moment is quite sufficient to supply any probable necessities for two months to come . . . By Capt. Edward Smith who sail'd from hence in the Schooner *John* for Boston, I sent you two volumes of Price's Sermons . . . I could wish Mama might send me a box of Mrs. Dean's head pills by the first opportunity . . . "

The following account was sent by John to his father in August 1796 after his visit to Salem in April.

"List of my Expenses on Journey from Salem to Philadelphia and there since April 30th —

1796				
			Drs.	
April	To Amot. of my Bill of fares for stages		Drs.	
	from Boston to New London		11.	
	Victuals and lodging ditto		4.50	
	Passage on Shallop fron New London to Stratford		3.	
	Stage fare from Stratford to New York		4.50	
	Victuals and lodging on ditto		2.30	
	Expenses in New York		3.	
	Stage fare from New York to Philadelphia		4.	Drs. Cts.
	Victuals &c. on ditto		1.50	33.80
30	Paid for a Dictionary of the English Language			1.50

*John's journey to Philadelphia from Salem April 1796, including his interesting voyage down Long Island Sound in a shallop.

May	2	Paid for Hair Ribbon	.20
	8	" Washwoman in full	1.46
		" a Hair Comb	.27
	17	" Wm. Harlan for Marseilles for 2 Waistcoats	4.00
		" for expenses at Theatre with family	2.00
	18	" pair of Shoe Brushes	.70
		" pair of Gloves	.50
		" having a Tooth extracted	1.50
	19	" 2 volumes Hunter's Dissertations	2.00
		" Shoe Strings	.23
	23	" 2 pairs of patent silk stockings @ 4 Drs.	8.00
	27	" Mrs. Smith, Washwoman, for washg & mendg.	2.80
June	4	Paid altering Coat & breeches by a Taylor at the house	.70
	6	" mending my umbrella, both Sticks and cloth	.75
	8	" Hair Ribbon & string	.30
	10	" paper for writing paper & quills	.50
	11	" Mrs. Smith in full for washg	1.88
	15	" polital progress of Great Britain	1.50
	21	" White Hat	6.00
July	2	" Mrs. Smith in full for washg & mendg	2.50
	4	" Horse hire to Gray's Gardens) Entertainment on that day)	4.
	9	" 3 pairs of Cotton Stockings @ 12s./6	5.
	15	" a new lock to my trunk	.50
	19	" Mrs. Smith in full for washg. & mendg	2.25
	26	" a dose of Salts	.12
Aug.	7	" Mrs. Smith in full for washg. & mendg	2.50
	8	" Mr. Gardner for extracting tooth & plugging another	1.50
		some soft fruit to eat on the same day	.25
		Drs.	89.21
		Shoemaker's Bill up to 10th Inst.	6.90
		Barber's Bill for 3 months to 10th Inst.	8.00
		Taylor's Bill not Rendered	
		Drs.	104.11

Amot. of Expenses for 3½ Months 70.31
Ditto on Journey 33.80

Philadelphia, August 10th, 1796
J. Nichols

Dr. Statement of Receipts & Expenditures of Money Rec'd from Mr. I Nichols since April 20th) Cr.

1796
April 30, To Amot. Expenses of Journey from Salem & in Philadephia to August 10th 104.11

May 10th, To Amot. of Messrs. Jos. Anthony & Sons Acct. Transmitted You 151.20

To Amot. of monies paid to Mr. Maybin, which I had rec'd for Sales of

Mackerel and expended for my own demands, agreeable to verbal statement to you when at home	76.00
To this sum paid for 2 Volumes of Price's Sermons	1.50
To Balance in my hands	58.57
	$391.38
	100

1796

April 22, By this Sum Rec'd from Mr. I Nichols in Notes	245.00
May 11, By Amot. Rec'd for Thos. Fitzimmon's bills	46.39
June 21, By this Sum Rec'd from Mr. I Nichols pr. Post on a Note	100.00
	$391.38
	100

I am not certain as to the sum Rec'd in Salem, whether 245 or 255 Drs. pray ascertain it."

"Philadelphia 8th September 1796

"Honored Sir:

... Your kind letter gave me the distressing intelligence of the Decease of my much Respected and much lamented Aunt Peirce.* The knowledge of this event fills my mind with real grief, the loss, which Uncle and the Dear Children have experienced thereby is truly beyond estimation ... Death, my dear Parent, continues to make breeches upon us without respecting merit or value in this object, his shafts come often unexpected to us all, and even now while I am indulging myself in the happy reflection that I still possess the protecting Influence of Parents he may be about to inflict the same grevious stroke on me ... Heaven, I pray, may long avert the destiny, for the Idea is too distressing to entertain. (Strangely John's early death anteceded that of his parents by approximately forty years.) ... I have nothing especial at present to communicate, only that Mr. Anthony, Senior, left yesterday for New York, and perhaps farther Eastward;

*Sarah Ropes Peirce, wife of Jerathmiel, died 1796.

his chief Business there is the despatching of the Ship *America* who will sail about the 20th inst. for Madras and the other ports on the Coast of India, with a large amount in Specie for purchasing a cargo of Pepper to return to this Port.

"I am your loving son, John Nichols.

"N.B. You done full as well or better by selling the *Olive Branch* at Salem than to have sent her this way, and I think far better than to keep her."

"Philadelphia, September 20, 1796

"... I would thank you to ask the question of a Captain (who I find by Mr. Derby's letter to the house has lately arrived with his vessel at your port from the Isle of France) What was the demand and price there for the Articles of Spermaceti, Candles, French Chocolate, and Cutlery Wares; the Reason is that myself and some others in the Compting House have an adventure consisting of these Articles, on board the Ship *Northern Liberties* ... This City never was freer from Sickness than it has been this Season; for my own part I have been, and still am as usual, in high health, and spirits too *sometimes*. Please render my thanks to Mama for the pills she was so good as to send me, as well as for her very kind and affectionate Letter.

I remain your affectionate Son
John Nichols"

Soon after John writes to his mother:

"Philadelphia, Sept. 30th, 1796

"My Dear Mama,

With the most heartfelt satisfaction did I receive and peruse your precious Letter of ye 30th ultimo — the delights it gives me to find that I have contributed in some measure to the Comfort and happiness of my beloved Mother, is far better conceived than described. I will not; for I cannot, express the pleasing sensations I experience in reflecting that you recognize Gratitude in me, for the multiplied and unspeakable advantages your maternal affection has constantly afforded me — I hope I shall profit much by the very kind & Instructing Counsel, your letter contains, relative to my present situation — altho when Judging of the prejudice I entertain, you will consider that circumstances frequently occur, which produce a striking Contrast, between *one Situation & the other,* in the Mind, and consequently

affect it, as well as the Sense, yet all powerful Reason soon dispels these selfish Reflections, which like Clouds obstruct and prevent the enlightening Influence of its Rays upon the understanding. *one* is then able to reconcile the chilling coldness and unfriendly deportment of a fellow Creature towards *them,* by seeing how little Man is, in his Nature Inclined to be actuated by disinterested motives, how few actions of his life, but spring from the most selfish and sorded principles, by seeing in fact ones own poor self in all its frailty & weakness, subject to those very propensities so much condemn'd in others, this Disposition which the great Author of our Nature doubtless Intended for the most wise and valuable purposes, has like most others of the rich gifts of Heaven been so flagrantly abus'd, by weak vain Mortals that it has become a curse, Instead of a blessing — as originally design'd — Seeing however, that such is the present State of the Human System —I conceive it be incumbent on me, to adapt this as an unalterable Rule — to look for no Friendship, nor assistance from any one, but what I have acquired, or bought of them by my own merit & exertions — or in other words, by being Capable of rendering Service to others, make it a self Interested Principle in them to help, befriend, or advance me in life — I am sensible of the difficulty as well as unpleasantness that will attend the reducing this System, to practice, but 'tis wholly abused to amuse oneself with anything more flattering, if I rise to wealth, and real Respectability, I must be Indebted to myself, and no one else therefor should I possess them, without acquiring, they will not afford me any Substantial enjoyment, nor will the World give me full Credit for their Value; but 'tis time to dismiss *this* Moralizing Subject, and enter upon one of a more Important, altho of more sorrowful Nature — which related to the distressing Event, of the Decease of my much beloved and much Respected Aunt Peirce unpardonably delayed by me till this late *Part* of my Letter — Mournful as is the occasion, and great the loss to all the Relatives & Friends, what can be expected from any of them but an effusion of the most poignant Grief? each must feel dispos'd to mingle with the other, Fears of heartfelt Woe, and tho far greater bereavement to my Dear Uncle, and his children cannot but awaken every tender feeling of Sympathy within us; — Notwithstanding the State of my aggrieved Mind was much more befitted to Receive than give consolation, and the Language it suggested rather calculated to depress than reviving a wounded Spirit — I deem'd it Incumbent on

me to address my Uncle and my Cousins, altho in a manner expressive of my deep regret, and the Sincerity of my Condolence for their loss as well as my ideas of the propriety & necessity of Submitting to the Dispensations of the all wise, and Just Parents of the Universe without repining — & moreover stating the Earthly Comforts I conceive to be still in their possession, that were capable of affording them alleviation under their present heavy suffering — should my Letters prove to be conducive to those Ends for which they are design'd, I shall consider myself peculiarly fortunate in having dictated them, but for all the defects that may be found, I trust they will find an excuse in my Youth & experience — What more I can add on this sorrowful Subject, will neither Illustrate the Superior & exalted Merits of my blessed Aunt nor perhaps lighten the afflicting Stroke of her Decease, which you my Dearest Mother must feel keenly, for your Language speaks as much but (permitting me to make use of your divine expression) let us all bear up under it with Christian Fortitude, (knowing that our loss is her unspeakable gain) and (by the practice of those virtues which adorn'd her life) Insure a meeting in a future State of happiness that will be permanent & without alloy — I admire exceedingly the delineation of her Character in your Paper, as well for its modesty & Justness, as its beauty — It affords me abundant satisfaction to hear my Dear little Brothers Henry & Joseph Peirce come forward so finely — their Innocent Prattle must be highly gratifying to you all Pray don't fail to kiss the sweet boys often for me—the parental regard that produce's your anxiety about Brother George is a corroboration to us happy Children of the goodness of our best of Mothers, but 'tis a circumstance *most pleasing* that nothing yet admits of our being uneasy Respecting him — I notice your particular Information relative to my good Uncles, each of whom I sincerely wish may amply experience the blessings of Health, happiness & prosperity in their several pursuits — please present my cordial Congratulations to Uncle Timothy (when you see him) on his late Marriage to so agreeable & aimable a Person, as I found Miss I forgot her name, to be, when in Salem — pray also make my Compliments acceptable to his Lady. I highly approve of Uncle Peirce's Intention to give his Son the Benefit of a Classical Education, being convinced by my own Short Experience, that no Qualification is so necessary for a young Person to enter with advantages upon the Stage of life, as a well Improved mind — I am happy to hear Mrs. Lear & Grandson are so pleasantly situated

in Washington, and shall strive to see her on return Eastward as for News with us worth relating to you, I scarcely recollect a Syllable — only that I have not yet had the honor of an Interview with Mr. John Pickering, altho I can't reproach myself with backwardness to obtain it, this, if not news, is at least somewhat Extraordinary but I don't think I shall worry myself about the matter. It would be very agreeable to enjoy the Society of a Person of Mr. Ps good sense & understanding, but I can never think of obtaining his or anyones else, at the expence of that dignity of Conduct which it is the Indispensible duty of every one to preserve, Mr. Anthony is now on a Tour Eastward and may perhaps pay Salem a visit ere he Returns, should it be the case I have no doubt his Reception will be such as to afford an additional proof of the Injustice of those Illiberal Imputations cherished by little Minds against my Native Spot — my grateful thanks are from

John Nichols

Philadelphia, Sept 30, 1796"

From John Nichols to his father Ichabod —

"Philadelphia, Oct. 13, 1796.

"Honored Sir

Since my last Respects, I am favour'd with your very affectionate Letter of the 4th Inst. covering Mr. Benjamin Hodges' Draft at 40 Days date in my favor upon Messrs. Wharton & Lewis for 250 Dollars, which is accepted, and when paid the money shall be appropriated as you direct, but I cannot help repeating my regret that you have made the remittance if it should prove in any measure Inconvenient to you. The chief purport of this is to Inclose you Bill of Lading for Fifteen Barrels Pippins, One Trunk of Old Cloaths and a paper bundle containing two complete Sets of Doctor Priestly's Sermons, shipp'd on board Schr *Pomona,* Capt. Gardner, for Boston, who engages to put them on board one of your Coasters, they paying him freight for the same. All I hope will get safe to hand and prove satisfactory. I have endeavour'd to conform as much as possible to your Directions in procuring these Apples, and think I have succeeded pretty well; should you not find them so good as you could wish, the fault must be attributed to their general Inferiority this season, which I believe is the case. You will observe that I have lessen'd the Quantity from what your Letter express'd, thinking that price too high to be consider'd "reasonable" and in which case only I conceiv'd I was at Liberty to

ship the full Quantity. They cost 17/6 per barrel, besides 8 d. per ditto expenses. Should you still want the remainder, please Inform me immediately and they shall be sent you. I have wrote to Mama respecting the Cloaths, who will understand what is to be done with them and as the Trunk is to come back, would thank you to get it newly covered if it can be conveniently done. Doctor Priestly's Sermons cost about $2¼ per Sett, or $4½ the whole. I have applied to all the eminent Booksellers in the City with the order from Mr. Bentley and can't find a single volume . . . "

In this letter to his father, John again brings up sickness — this time in Salem:

"Philadelphia, November 8, 1796

"Honored Sir

" . . . distressing indeed must be the Situation of your dear Family, laboring under such general and severe sickness;* yet may Heaven protect and preserve the lives of you all, nor suffer the hopes you entertain of being favour(d) with the preservation of the whole of your tender flock to be frustrated . . . I hope and pray my Dear Father that you and Mama will take due care of your own very precious Healths, which must of necessity be greatly expos'd. If 'twill not be deem'd presumptuous, I would suggest the value, the vast Importance, of your lives to a numerous, and in a manner helpless, family of children; let this, I beseech you among other causes prompt my beloved parents to be careful to the utmost of their health . . . Capt' Lander will sail in the course of a Week. I have taken unweary pains to collect the Books for Dr. Bently but without success. Our Book Stores (and perhaps many of them) larger and more extensive than any on the Continent, yet scarce any of the Books in the *Doctor's Order have ever been heard of by those I applied to, much more kept by them.* By mere chance I met with a private person who had "Stiles' Judges" which I bought, and shall send it by Capt. Lander. It is a circumstance, unpleasant to me, to hear that the *Betsey* is likely to do so Badly. Yet, to find my Dear Father, that you exercise the enviable virtue of Resignation under all your troubles and misfortunes gives me Satisfaction that much more than compensates for the unpleasant reflection of the Loss of Worldly Substance . . . our House have this

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*The children all having Small Pox and Hospitalized in turn.

Season experienced an influx of Business hitherto unequal'd . . . and Port is crowded with Vessels, many of them from your and other Quarters, seeking employ, but not the smallest encouragement offers to send them out, and but for the Discharging Vessels it would appear a kind of Sunday along shore. Money is evidently appreciating fast, and serious times are apprehended among the Trading Class the coming Winter. Our Produce continues high, althought it has fallen some . . . "

In the following letter John shows that he still has an interest in business:

"Philadelphia, November 25, 1796

"Honor'd Sir:

. . . In consequence of your advices Respecting the prospect of adventuring to the Isle of France*, and the numerous Adventurers which also appear in our quarter to that Island, we have concluded to give up the Idea we had form'd of making a Shipment from hence . . . Upon cool Deliberation, both Mr. Maybin and myself fully coincide with you in opinion, that this Trade will be quite overdone, for besides the great numbers that have gone, and are going, from the Eastern States, 3 Ships, 2 Brigs and 1 Schooner have sail'd within 3 months from this Port direct to the Isle of France and back with very valuable and well-assorted cargo, one large Ship of 400 Tons, and our own of 350 Tons, both to sail in 2 Weeks direct there and back. The former is said to have as rich a Cargo as ever was shipp'd from here; the latter is about $100,000, consisting of almost everything that can be nam'd. These will be followed by another Ship our House will fix out before the close of the River. Among these Vessels much Claret Wine in Casks and Cases has gone, and the Cargo we shall next Ship will be almost entirely of that Article. I have also learn't that several Vessels have gone from New York, several from Baltimore, and I know not how many from the Southward of that. Such a numerous fleet must certainly overdo the Business, and many doubtless sink property. For our parts we are very happy that we have enter'd no farther into this affair, and feel extremely oblig'd for your particular information. I must therefore avail myself of your very kind offer to keep my little

*In Indian Ocean & a customary port of call for vessels bound to India.

property going in your Vessels, that it may be better than to lay dead . . .

"In much haste I remain your dutiful and affectionalte Son
John Nichols

"The Fish came to hand in good order, and shall be soon distributed. I shall attend to send you the Flour and a Trunk of old Cloaths"

Early the next year another son is born to Ichabod, and thus John acknowledges him:

"Philadelphia, February 17, 1797.

"Honored Sir:

" . . . The Intelligence you communicate of our Family having received the further addition of a charming Boy* affords me lively pleasure; Pray permit me to congratulate you and Mama and all my Brothers and Sisters on the joyful occasion, nor must any of you forget to give Brother David a kiss from me. I observe with infinite satisfaction that my Dear Mother and the Infant are so well; Heaven grant her health may be speedily re-established, and the babe preserved to its parents, and prove to them a future comfort and blessing. It's intended name I think is well-chosen, and pleases me much. . . . Your determination to discontinue hazarding at sea is certainly very judicious; no period of time ever required more prudence and forebearance on the part of a Merchant, I believe, than the present. When the prospect will brighten seems yet doubtful; the latest advices from Europe state Mr. Pinkney's having been favorable received by the French Directory . . . "

John Nichols was evidently greatly loved by his younger brothers and sisters at home, as the following little letter from his younger brother, Benjamin, attests:

"Salem, April 30, 1797

"Dear Brother:

I now take this opportunity to write by Mr. Goodhue, for it is a long time since I have received your letter, but excuse me that I had not wrote you before, for I have not had much time. I hope you will

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*David Nichols born 1797, died 1814 of consumption while at Harvard, presumably named for Ichabod's father, David who was lost on a fishing expedition in 1756.

also excuse my writing for I suppose you can scarcely read it.* I should be very glad to come and see you at Philadelphia if my Parents were willing, I also hope that you will come home and see me and the family very soon. I hope Brother George will get home very soon to join the family. Brother Henry and Joseph Peirce are both very fond of Playing. along time ago they saw you, and now they are always talking about you.

"I remain your loving brother,
Benja. Nichols"

George, returned to Salem safely after his long voyage, receives the following letter from John:

"Philadelphia, August 3, 1797

"My dear Brother,

I have this evening experienced the most perfect happiness Imaginable by the receipt of your kind favor which announces the joyful event of your safe arrival at last in Salem. What a Comfort it must be to Papa & Mama as well as to our other connections, that you are once more restored unto them safe and in good health, after the perils & Dangers you have undergone — & equally as happy must you have felt in meeting them — I, altho not with you to partake of & contribute to the general joy, feel I trust as lively pleasure as the rest on this occasion, & am as strongly Impelled to give a tribute of Gratitude & thanks to the Supreme Being, for this special Instance of his Goodness unto us — From the Advices I have already received from Papa, respecting your Voyage*, I conclude it must be great, at which I Rejoice, particularly on our Dear Papa's Accot, as it will serve much to lighten the losses he may meet with of property now at risque of which there is great danger from the French Cruisers that swarm upon the Oceans & Capture in a manner, the most unprecedented, all American Vessels they meet — Whenever you have leisure, be pleased to write me again & give me such particulars of your Voyage as you think worth communicating, what have been your Emoluments & Profits & how you will wind up also, what the returns are of my small Adventure All

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*Benjamin aged 11 years, need hardly have apologized for his penmanship. See photostat copy of the actual letter.

*His voyage of 1796-1797 on Brig. *Eunice*. See Martha Nichols, *A Salem Shipmaster,* pp. 31-37

Information from you, my Dear Brother on those heads at your leisure I shall feel grateful for & after once more Congratulating you on your safe arrival, I conclude in haste & Remain your affectionate Brother

Jno Nichols"

"N.B. please Remember my love & best regards to our Dear Parents, our Brothers & Sisters & their Connexions who with yourself I hope are still in the enjoyment of Good health, as this leaves me — Inform Papa, I wrote him by Mr. S. Derby one Saturday Evening & should replied by this Post to his kind favor just received, if time permitted.

Mr. George Nichols
to the Care of Mr. Ichabod Nichols
Mercht Salem
Massachusetts"

On August 5th, 1797, George writes a full letter to his brother John in Philadelphia with word of his voyage on the *Eunice*. In the postscript to this letter George tells of piracy:

"... Capt. Hodges' crew arrived in town yesterday, all of whom were out on board the privateer the day after she was taken, and put on Board of a Charlestown vessel. Capt. Hodges and his boy were left on board the *Friendship* which I am in great fear will be condemned, the loss of which to Papa will be great indeed ... The People were striped of most of their clothes — all the chests robbed, and have come destitute of all their property — this is the conduct of our good and faithful allys unworthy of the name of anything but Murderers, Robbers, Pirates and everything that is Bad. Enough upon this subject ... all business is at a stand. I hardly know what to do with myself as is the case with most of our townsmen. Benjamin Peirce goes to Cambridge College this morning ... I have so much to communicate to you that I do not know when to stop my Pen. John Shillan came home with us and has made a good voyage and is quite a sailor ..."

G. Nichols"

On the 17th of October in the year 1797 George was in Alexandria at just the season when his longed-for brother John was visiting their parental home in Salem. George sends the following letter to his brother there:

"My Dear Brother

From the great duty and Obligation I consider myself under to my

best of Brothers I cannot think of leaveing this Country for so long a time ere I address you with a few lines. I have at this time undertaken a Voyage to India in the Barque *Vigilant* belonging to Captn Forister of Salem commanded by Danl Hathorn which was quite unexpected to me having by 5 day notice previous leaving Salem which was on the 28 Ult, and arrived at this place on the 23 Instant after a rough passage of 26 days, we are now taking in a cargo of Flour and Tobacco for the Isle of France — from thence to Manilla or China, but I think Manilla will be the place which Voyage will consume 17 or 18 months. I am going in much the same capacity I went with Captn Swet but rather more favorable for me excepting the Pirats troubling us which I hope may not be the case, but time alone will determine it. It gives me much anxiety my Dear Brother that I must quit my native Shore again without Seeing you but trust I shall not be deprived of a line from you which I have not had the pleasure of for a great wile, but will not compute it want of Inclination, but opportunity.

"You are now on the eve of leaving I suppose Mr. Anthony when I trust you may meet with some lucrative employment sufficient to reward you for the time you have been employed with Mr. Anthony but sincerely wish you have no thoughts of going to sea as I can assure you anything is prefferable to it is really a Dog's life. In haste I must bid you adieu with wishing you every blessing and happiness the world can bestow upon you and remain

Your Affectionate Brother
George Nichols

"N.B. We shall sail in 10 or 12 Days and trust I shall not be deprived of the happiness of a line from you which you will be pleased to direct to the care of Mr. James Porter of this town which I will endeavor to answer. You will excuse this Scrawl as I am in great haste."

The following letter from George to his beloved older brother John is the last that was ever written by George to John; very possibly it never even reached him. The letter is incorrectly addressed, as George fears in the text. We have the letter and its interestingly addressed envelope today, and note that the original address is to Mr. John Nichols, Philadelphia — this word being then crossed out, and Salem, Massachusetts substituted. In an unknown hand on the envelope is written "This letter was left at my home by the post boy and opened when I found it belongs to one who is supposed to live at Mr.

Anthony's." Also, in a small handwriting not that of either John or George there is written on the same envelope the notation "from my brother George . . . 1797." It is likely this is the handwriting of John Nichols' much younger brother, "little" Henry who probably copied later all of John's treasured letters home; after his death these were carefully bound in a leather-covered folder into which were burned indelibly the letters, ICHABOD NICHOLS — HIS BOOK.
The letter reads:

"Alexandria November 1797

"My Dear Brother: With much pleasure your esteem'd favor of the 17th ultm was received by me this evening before last which announced the inteligence of your safe return to Salem where you found our Dear Family and connexions enjoying the inestimable blessing of health which I consider to be the greatest happiness this world can afford. It gives me much anxiety that our Dear Papa once more entertains an idea of going to sea; which I hope is not necessary. Would to Heaven it was in our Power to prevent it for the attainment of which nothing would be too perilous for me to do. The sea-fareing life to the most rugged young men is really a wretched miserable Dog's life. Consider then how disagreeable it must be to our Dear Father who is scarcely able to endure the fatigues of life at home. I beseech you my Dear Brother to entreat of him to think of some kind of Business which will make him contented to spend the few rémaining days which God shall please to continue to him with his blessed Family and connexions at home. I should wish there could be some kind of Business which if it should be undertaken might afford a moderate maintenance for himself and Family which is all that is necessary. I think a Grocery Store might answer and many other kinds of Business which do not occur to me at Present. And if nothing better I think living upon a Farm would be prferable to plowing the Sea. Shall say no more upon the Subject, only that I sincerely wish you may succeed in your persuasions to get him to stay at home.

"I am extremely sorry Dear Brother that you find Business so dull . . . which is really the case here. but hope ere it be long your prospects will be more Flatring. if not and you should conclude to go to sea, give me leave to recommend a voyage to some healthy part of India in prefference to Europe or any other part of the Globe, as I think the passage is more pleasant, and the Voyages in general more lucrative

which must be the only object in going to sea — accept of my sincere thanks for your kind wishes towards me upon this Voyage, and hope it may prove as advantageous as my present prospect appears. The circumstances of which you have been informed by Papa without doubt before this I am as pleas'd with my present cituation as I had reason to expect when I left home. Captn Hathorne appears to be an agreeable good man and also his officers and don't duobt but we shall live as agreeable and happy as the business will admit.

"Our passage from Salem to this place was extremely rough, the most so I ever experienced. We arrived here on the 23d Ultimo and are now about one quarter part loaded with Flour which will be the most of our Cargo excepting 25 or 30 Tobacco and if the weather is good shall sail from this for the Isle of France in 8 or 10 and from thence to Manilla or China which of those two is uncertain at present, but as our Ship sails heavy am afraid I shall be deprived of the happiness of seeing you and or Friends in Salem for 15 or 16 months which seems too long to look forward and hope during that time Papa with Yourself will meet sufficient encouragement to stay on shore. please give our love to our Dear Parents Brothers and Sisters and all our connexions at home, and that this may find you with all of them enjoying the inestimable Blessing of health in as great a Degree as this now leaves me is the Prayers of your sincere Friend and affectionate Brother

George Nichols

N.B. "I have wrote to you in Philadelphia expecting to find you there which I suppose will not be received by you be so good as to tell Mama, Sister Lydia, and some other of our good Friends that I shall endeavor to drop them a line by Captn Samuel Very which will be in three weeks or four Weeks and the first convenient opportunity — but excuse me if I should not write you again, as my time is mostly taken up with the Business of the Ship.

G. N."

Whether the letter quoted above ever reached John or not it was lovingly treasured by his family; this is so today after only thirty years short of 200. In this last letter of George to John there is certainly written a true story and a sad saga of the sea-faring brothers; shortly before this letter was written, George and John had hopes of meeting at last in the happy parental home after their long separation of four

years. This hope and this longing are expressed in their correspondence for several months previous to John's visit home in the early fall of 1797. George was to make his home visit also at this time to coincide with that of John's, but his sailing for Alexandria was advanced in date unexpectedly so that the meeting never took place. George speaks without apprehension about the prospect of absence for 15 or 16 months, and in the same breath of his longing to meet again with John. A bare five months after the letter was written, the beloved brother John died of a fever while on a voyage in the West Indies — again a most sad turn of fortune's wheel, just a few weeks before he was to have another longed-for visit at home in Salem!

As one may see, John has often more the tone of a brother in writing to his father Ichabod, and the counsel of a father in writing to his younger brother George. One can hardly believe that so practical a character had any prescience or forewarning of death, but certain it is that in 1797 he wrote voluminously of his love, care and anxiety for home and family, and sent the most careful admonitions to his younger brother; so in writing George of their father:

"He certainly is too old, and too much broken by hardships, to endure the fatigues of a sea-faring life . . . let us exert ourselves, my dearly beloved brother, to acquire wherewith to support our much-honored Parents, and their tender flock, should they need our assistance at a future period . . . I can only add that the most ardent prayers and wishes of a fond Brother are you may experience Heaven's kind protection during your voyage, and spared by all perils by sea and land . . . and in due season may we have the happiness of meeting mutually joyful . . . "

But, sadly, in spite of the ardent wishes and prayers on the part of both brothers, the meeting for which they prayed was never to take place. George survived all distant and perilous voyages, but John, who in every letter feared and prayed for his brother, died in the year following the ardent plea for George's well-being. John died in fulfillment of his unselfish duty in nursing his beloved ship's Captain Bradshaw during a virulent tropical fever which he contracted.

During his last year John wrote to his father often and fully, as well as to his brother George. In March 1798, John wrote to his father from Bordeaux, France:

" 'Tis with lively pleasure I take up my pen for a few moments . . . this, my third by the *Speedwell,* Captain Brown . . . My situation has also been very agreeable — the greatest harmony of good understanding has always subsisted between Captain Bradshaw and myself, and all our proceedings have been conducted by the most mutual consent . . . for my own part emollument will be very handsome . . .
" . . . American affairs still wear a gloomy unpleasant aspect, and although there is not a real probability of War between the 2 Countries, yet all differences will not be adjusted without much difficulty and delay — The American name has greatly fallen here because of the terrible unprincipled conduct of some of them in France.
"I feel anxious my dear Sir for the safety of your Property that you had at Sea, especially for what you had in the *Perseverance,* for if she were taken by a French Cruiser, she would be inevitably lost — but I fondly hope a better fate than that awaits you.
"As to Politicks, I am unable to say much on the Subject, and if I could it would be imprudent . . .
"As to my brother George, poor fellow, I fear 'twill be a long lapse of time e'er we have the happiness to meet again — I feel anxious and uneasy about him since the last Decree of the Directory.
" . . . We are pursuing our plan to go to the West Indies, which I hope thru Providence will prove advanteous to you, and meet your approbation — we have, to be sure, many perils to run*, but they are perhaps not greater than for a long time past . . . "

Having arrived in Pt. Petre, Guadaloupe in late May of 1798, John wrote his last letter to Ichabod in Salem:

"May 26, 1798

"My dear Father,

Thinking it might be Some satisfaction to you, to have a line from me directed to your own good self, I devote a moment with attempts

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*In this reference to the "perils run," John alluded to the danger which American vessels at this time ran of capture by the French. In a previous letter to his father written in August, 1797, John had told of seeing in a Philadelphia paper "the name of the Brig *Friendship,* Hodges Master — among the list of vessels recently captured by the French . . . their sole plea her coming from a British Port . . . "That faithless, piratical, infernal nation, etc."

to the pleasing task, altho I can say little or nothing more than is in my letter to yourself of Capt. Hodges Except to Expect my assurance to you that amidst sickness and distress, I enjoy through the Mercy of Almighty God perfect health and strength & under his favor hope to continue to possess that Inestimable blessing & may it also be his blessed will — that this may find you & my dear Mother & all the rest of our beloved Family & Friends — in the same Situation — You may naturally Suppose, my Dear Father, that I am oppressed with a heavy load on my Shoulders Deprived of Capt. Bradshaws aid & assistance, but I hope to wade through, without Difficulty — his Situation is I fear somewhat precarious; but I have great hopes he will recover. He is merely a dead weight on my hands as he naturally requires a part of my attention. & my time is divided & fully Employed between him & my business — I pray you not to be anxious about me, I take, I trust, all prudent & proper measures for the preservation of my health & hope through Providence to succeed therein — Should Capt. Bradshaws Sickness not prevent us, I hope & Expect to have the pleasure to take you by the hand in 15 or 20 Days, after the receipt of this letter & if we are so fortunate as to arrive Safe and well our voyage will prove advantageous. Time will not permit me to say more, therefore, I shall conclude with my love to Mama & all my Brothers, & Sisters & all enquiring Friends & Remain your Dutiful & affectionate Son

John Nichols

From John Nichols to his Father
Point Petre, May 26, 1798
Mr. Ichabod Nichols, Merchant
Salem — I Nichols June 1798"

A few days after writing the above, John himself came down with the fever, and died on June 8, 1798.

Following John's death his father Ichabod wrote the following touching letter to Miss Peters of Philadelphia:

"Miss Peters,

"You will doubtless be somewhat surprised on receiving this letter but must request you will please excuse & pardon the freedom I have taken in addressing these lines to you But I hope they may not be unwelcomed when I assure you that my motives for writing them flow from the purest source & are principally to inform you of the distres-

sing tidings of the death of my Darling son John Nichols & from your beautiful letters to him which has fallen into my hands I have good reason to presume your true & sincere Friend — he departed this life on the 8th June last at a Point Peter, Guadaloupe after but 4 days sickness with the yellow fever. Would inform you that My son sailed from Salem in Dec. last for Bordeaux in a Brig of my own on a Trading voyage that he completed his business there & sailed from there in April for the West Indies, where he arrived at good markets in good health & spirits & had completed his business there & was on the point of sailing for Home as appears by Sundry letters from him — but alas he was taken sick on the 4th of June so violent that he departed this life on the 8th of the same month with all that serenity of Mind & resignation that had adorned his whole life, which bespeaks him a Man of Eminent Piety & Virtue — His death was without a groan or a sigh & with a Mind undisturbed, he was ready to receive the summons to render up his breath into the hands of him who gave it who always knows & does what is best for his children who seek him early. By your kind letter to my Dear Son on the 30th June 1797 I observe there was something had taken place not altogether so pleasing, but still it appeared there was true affection remained for each other without I observe you mention as you could not see each other for a time in future that you requested that he would send you his miniatures which I hope he sent you as a token of his esteem which I will assure you Merited reply so far as I can judge by your writing & that a union between you would most assuredly have met my approbation at a proper time had his life been spared provided the affections did remain for each other unimpaired & it was pleasing to your Mama & friends — I had such an interest always in my dear son that there is nothing that now remains which he owns particularly the valuable woman on whom it appears that he had placed his most tender & endearing affections to be the Partner of his Life, therefore indulge me so far as always to consider & view me as your sincere Friend & that you will accept the trifles which I herewith inclose as a token of respect for my dear sons sake of $100 which you will dispose of in any way you may deem consistant — Provided my dear son gave you his miniatures please to do me the favour to employ some able hand to take its likeness & forward the same with letter from your hand to me by some soft conveyance & the cost will be paid with pleasure — Should you or any of your friends pass our way please to do me the

favour to call at my House as it will be great happiness to me to see any one from Philadelphia whom my dear son valued — With Sentiments of Respect & Regard, believe me to be your sincere & affectionate Friend,

I. Nichols"

John Nichols' employer, Mr. Joseph Anthony of Philadelphia, wrote in part as follows to the father of young John:

"Philadelphia, 13th August, 1798

"Captain Ichabod Nichols

Dear Sir

Just at the breaking up of Congress and previous to the departure of our mutual and worthy friend, Mr. Goodhue, the melancholy news of the Death of your Darling son and my young friend, John, reached him, and he knowing the interest I feel in the Prosperity of your family, he was kind enough to send me a note communicating that unfortunate Event, which although the Authority was unquestionable, I could not realize until I Received your affectionate and distressing letter confirming what till then I was willing to consider only Report; Permit me, my dear sir, to condole with you on this mournful Event . . . John was certainly a young man of Intrinsic Merrit, of an accommodating disposition, and while with me acquitted himself with Fidelity, and won the esteem and Respect of all who had the pleasure of knowing him — My own Son, which I had the Misfortune to lose I considered of the same engaging Cast, and it was with Difficulty, and took a long time to reconcile me to the Separation, — Yet when I looked around and behold the Degeneracy of the Present Age, and Reflect that so far as Observation enables *me* to Judge that the *world is getting worse instead of better,* I consider it would be barbarous to wish him back . . .

. . . Present my Cordial Regards to your good Lady and charming offspring, and believe me with Sentiments of Sincere Esteem with all the Reality of Friendship and Lively affection, your much obliged

Friend and Humble Servant

Joseph M. Anthony"

At home the *Salem Gazette* printed an obituary notice of young John Nichols who had died so far from home:

> John Nichols, born July 13, '76, of
> aimable temper, of genteel accomplishments,
> of agreeable manners and solid virtues . . .*

and stated that he was preparing himself for a liberal education and extensive mercantile business and that he was for a time employed in Mr. Anthony's counting room at Philadelphia.

The voyages to the East outlined in the last two letters from George could not have endured as long as the anticipated "16 to 17 months," for just one year later, in November of 1798, we find him visiting his home in Salem. From his pen we find no allusion to the sad loss of his favorite older brother, while he was absent and at sea. The letter which we quote below is somewhat less warm and intimate than those he had always written to John. It is addressed to his younger brother, then a student at Harvard.

"Salem 10th November, 1798

"My Dear Brother

I am happy in embracing this favorable opportunity to drop these few lines. Although I have nothing in particular worth communicating; excepting the receipt of your esteemed Letter to Papa which came to hand yesterday by it we all received much pleasure in hearing of your good health, and happiness at Cambridge in which I may with much satisfaction say is the case with all of the Dear Family and Relations in Salem — I am sorry to say I am still the same situation as when you left home, viz. doing nothing and don't know when it will be other ways: but not many months, for it is tedious. as my business at present must be in following the seas I think. I hope there may be an offer in the spring. We have not had yet any news from Captn Hodges but doubtless you must have heard of Unkle H. Ropes' loss of his Schooner. Captn Deniss bound to Jamaica was taken and carried into Pont a Pic by the Frenche Pirates and condemners, his loss is between 3 and 4 thousand Dollars, having no Insurance. There has been news of Unkle Leach from St. Lucia and is daily expected. Nothing more to communicate. I must conclude with informing you that Papa, Mama, Aunt Jane, Sisters and Brother Benjamin join me with their love to you. wishing you the greatest happiness this world can afford, I remain your affectionate brother

Geo Nichols

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*Willard A. Nichols, *Genealogy*

"N.B. Papa I believe does not write by this opportunity as his time has been employed upon the business of the Frigate to be built in this town. Mama and Lydia are much engaged at present. You will please make my best respects to Cousin Benjamin Peirce and tell him I must expect a line from him soon. Likewise from yourself. You must excuse this wretched scrawl for I am too lazy to copy it over.

G. Nichols"

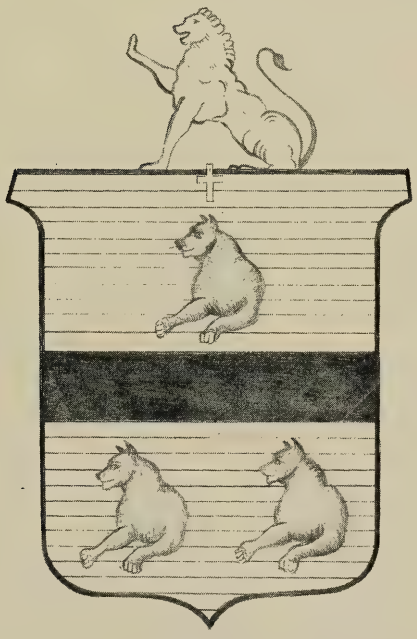
"Copenhagen 14th May, 1799

"Honored Mama,

I have the extreem pleasure to receive your excellent Letter of the 23d March on my arrival here the 11th Instant after a desagreeable passage of 97 Days from Salem. Your kind advice my Dear Mama I trust will be ever duly attended to not only by myself but all my Dear Brothers and Sisters, not only for our own happiness & Respectaability but for the happiness of our Dearest of Parents which you may be assured is the first wish of my heart being fully convinced that this is the greatest Reward which We can bestow upon them for all their anxiety and trouble. It gave much pain to learn the Death of Wm Pickman the loss to his Friends I cannot be so sensiable of as yourself. but alas my dear Mama it can be but a few days before we must all part to meet again I trust with our Dear Friends in the Blessed Mantions above — I am happy to hear of the Recovery of Unkle Leach which I was afraid would not have been the case — Unkle Timothy has I hope returned before this. with Respect to Cousin Sally I am certain that you must be sinciable of my attachment and my intentions, although I have never mentioned to You myself but you may be assured it was not for want of Respect to My worthy Parents that I have not done it. I have to request that she may ever be treated as one of the dearest of Your Children in our Family. In haste I will conclude with hopeing this may find Yourself with all our Dear Friends and Connexions enjoying the inestimable blessing of health in as great a Degree as this at present Leaves me. Please give my best Respects to Aunt Jane, Lydia, Ichabod Benj. Charlotte and our Little Brothers You must kiss Pearce and David often for me & tell them I will come home again soon and see them & Respects to all enquiring Friends — and Remain Your very Dutifull Son.

Geo. Nichols

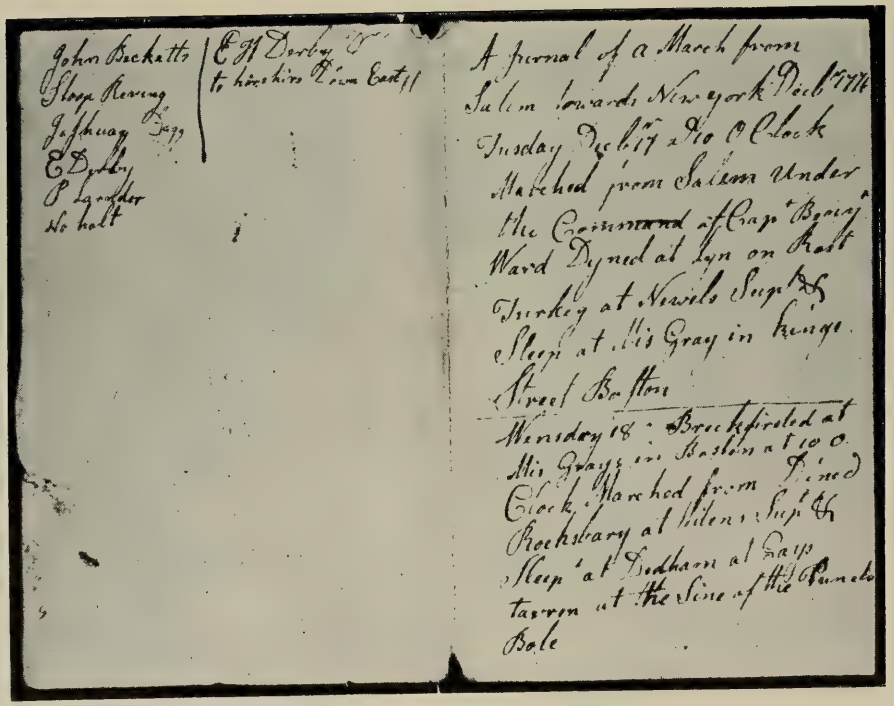
Peirce Coat of Arms — Sally's Embroidery



Nichols Coat of Arms, Adapted by Our Family

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

A Witch Trial



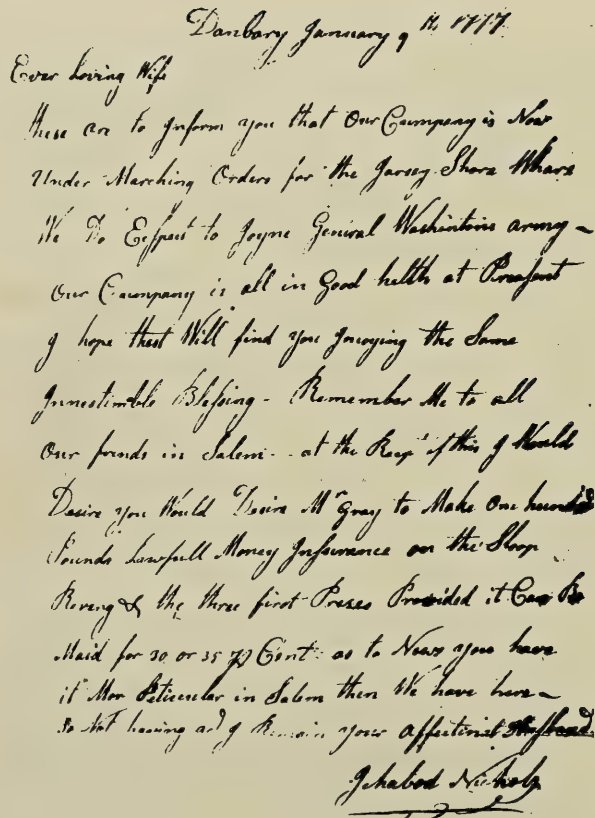
John Beckatts
Sloop Reving
Jaffhuay Gaggs
E Derby
P Larader
No halt

E H Derby
to hinchins Down East

A Journal of a March from
Salem towards New york Decbr 1776
Tusday Decbr 17 at 10 O Clock
Marched from Salem Under
the Command of Capt Benjn
Ward Dyned at Lyn on Rost
Turkey at Newels Supt &
Sleep at Mis Gray in kings
Street Boston

Wensday 18 : Breckfirsted at
Mis Grays in Boston at 10 O
Clock Marched from Dined
Rocksbary at Wilens Supt &
Sleep at Dedham at Gays
tavern at the Sine of the Punch
Bole

JOURNAL OF A MARCH FROM SALEM TO NEW YORK



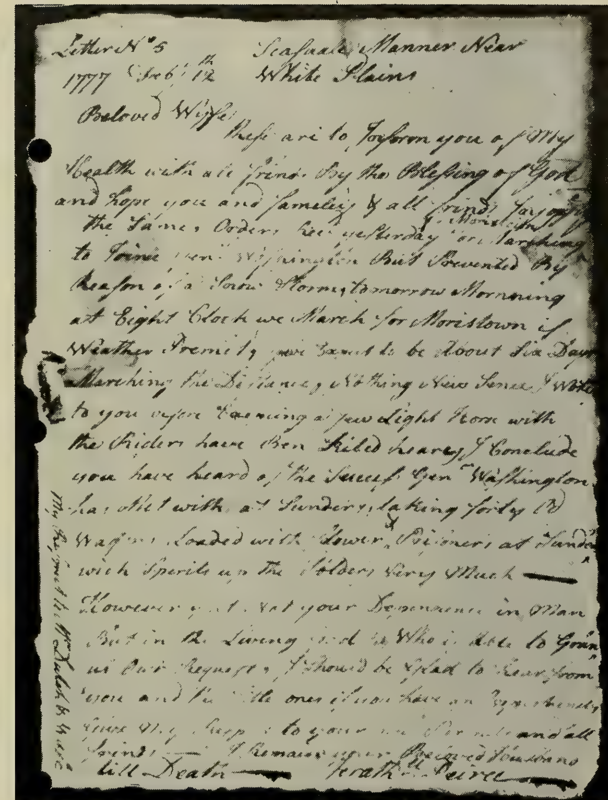
Danbury January 9th 1777.

Ever Loving Wife

These are to inform you that Our Company is Now
Under Marching Orders for the Jarsey Shore Whare
We Do Expect to Joyne Generall Washintons army —
Our Company is all in Good helth at Present
I hope these Will find you Enjoying the Same
Inestimable Blessing — Remember Me to all
Our friends in Salem — at the Req^t of this I Would
Desire you Would Desire Mr Gray to Make One hundred
Pounds Lawfull Money Insurance on the Sloop
Rover & the three first Prezes Provided it Can Be
Maid for 30 or 35 ℔ Cent: as to News you have
it Mor Paticular in Salem then We have here —
So Not having ad I Remain your Affectinat Husband

Ichabod Nichols

Ichabod Nichols to His Wife



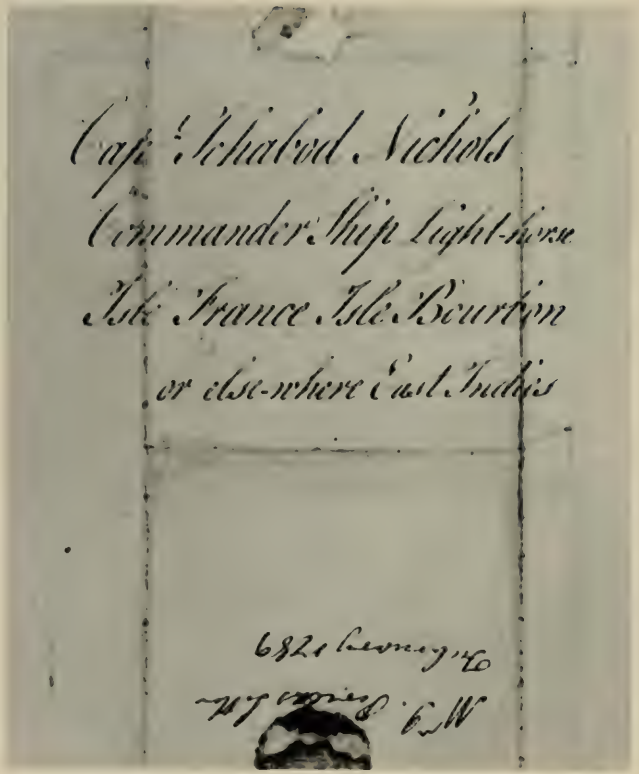
Letter No 5 — Seasdale Manner Near
1777 Feb 12th — White Plains

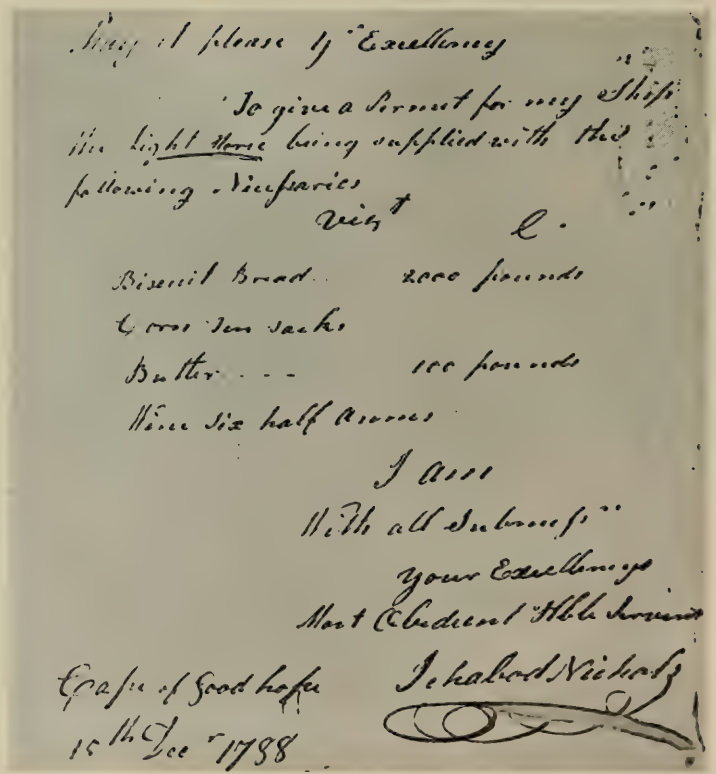
Beloved Wife

These are to Inform you of My
Health with all friends By the Blessing of God
and hope you and famely & all friends Injoy
the Same, Orders Came yesterday for Marching
to Joine Genl Washington But Prevented By
Reason of a Snow Storm; tomorrow Morning
at Eight Clock we March for Moristown if
Weather Permits; we Expect to be About Six Days
Marching the Distance; Nothing New Since I Wrote
to you upon Evening a few Light Horse with
the Riders have Ben Killed hearabouts; I Conclude
you have heard of the Success Genl Washington
has Met with at Sundry's, taking forty [illegible]
Wagons Loaded with Flower & Prisoners at Sundry
wich Sperits up the Solders Very Much —
However put Not your Dependence in Man
But in the Living God Who is Able to Grant
us Our Requests; I should be glad to hear from
you and the little ones if you have an opportunity
Give My [illegible] to your [illegible] and all
friends — I Remain your Beloved Husband
till Death — Jerath^l Peirce

My Respects to Mr Dalah & Wife

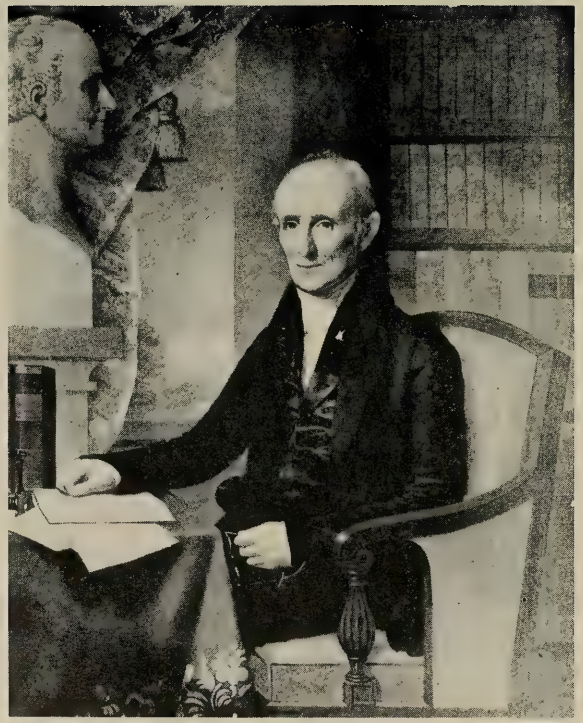
Jerathmiel Peirce to His Wife

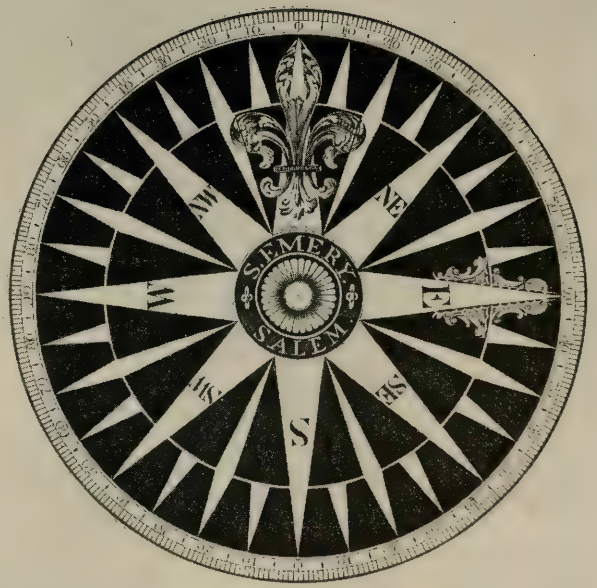




CAPT. ICHABOD NICHOLS — *LIGHT HORSE* VOYAGE PAPERS

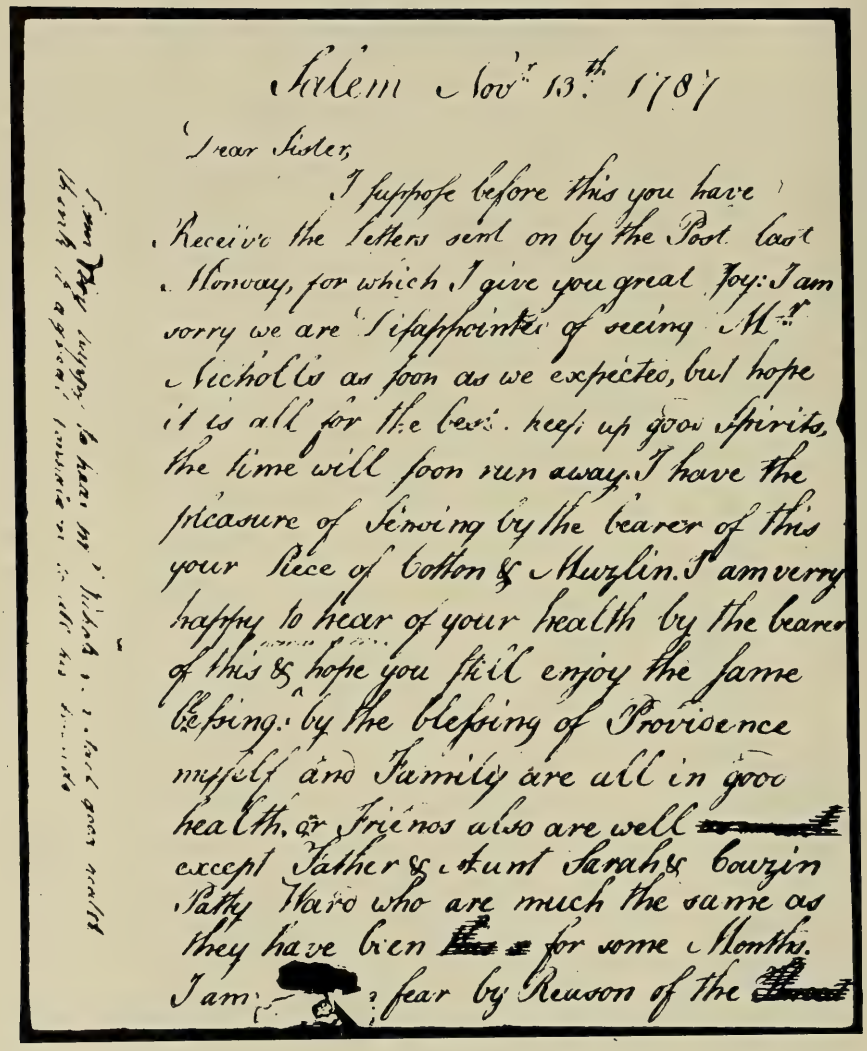
Basin and Pitcher Commemorating the *ACTIVE*





(Courtesy, Peabody Museum of Salem)

NATHANIEL BOWDITCH *(left)*, COMPASS CARD OF S. EMERY, 1808-1868 *(right)*



Salem Nov.r 13.th 1787

Dear Sister,

I suppose before this you have Receivd the letters sent on by the Post last Monday, for which I give you great Joy: I am sorry we are disappointed of seeing Mr. Nichols as soon as we expected, but hope it is all for the best. keep up good Spirits, the time will soon run away. I have the pleasure of Sending by the bearer of this your Piece of Cotton & Muzlin. I am verry happy to hear of your health by the bearer of this & hope you still enjoy the same Blessing. by the blessing of Providence myself and Family are all in good health, our Friends also are well [redacted] except Father & Aunt Sarah & Cousin Patty Ward who are much the same as they have been [redacted] for some Months. I am [redacted] fear by Reason of the [redacted]

SARAH PEIRCE TO HER SISTER LYDIA NICHOLS

Throat-distemper being in several Families
in Town and is called verry catching.
I long to see you, hope I shall in due Time
till when I must be content with hearing from
you which I shall expect every opportunity.
I wish you would remember me with respects
& love to your Mother & Sister and make
my Compliments to all Enquireing Friends.
I Conclude wishing you every blessing
your loveing Sister.

Sarah Peirce.

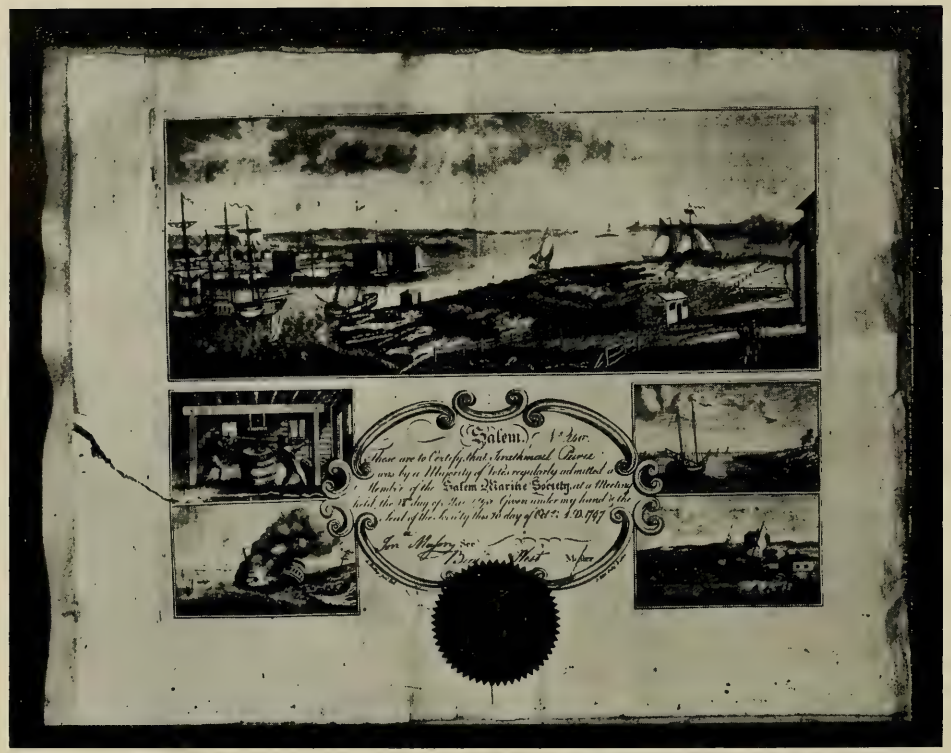
Lydia Nicholls.

P. S.

Mr. Peirce is at Boston but
the Children join me in respect to their
Aunt and love to their Cousins hoping to
see their Papa and them as soon as is
convenient.

[redacted]

SARAH PEIRCE TO HER SISTER *(continued)*

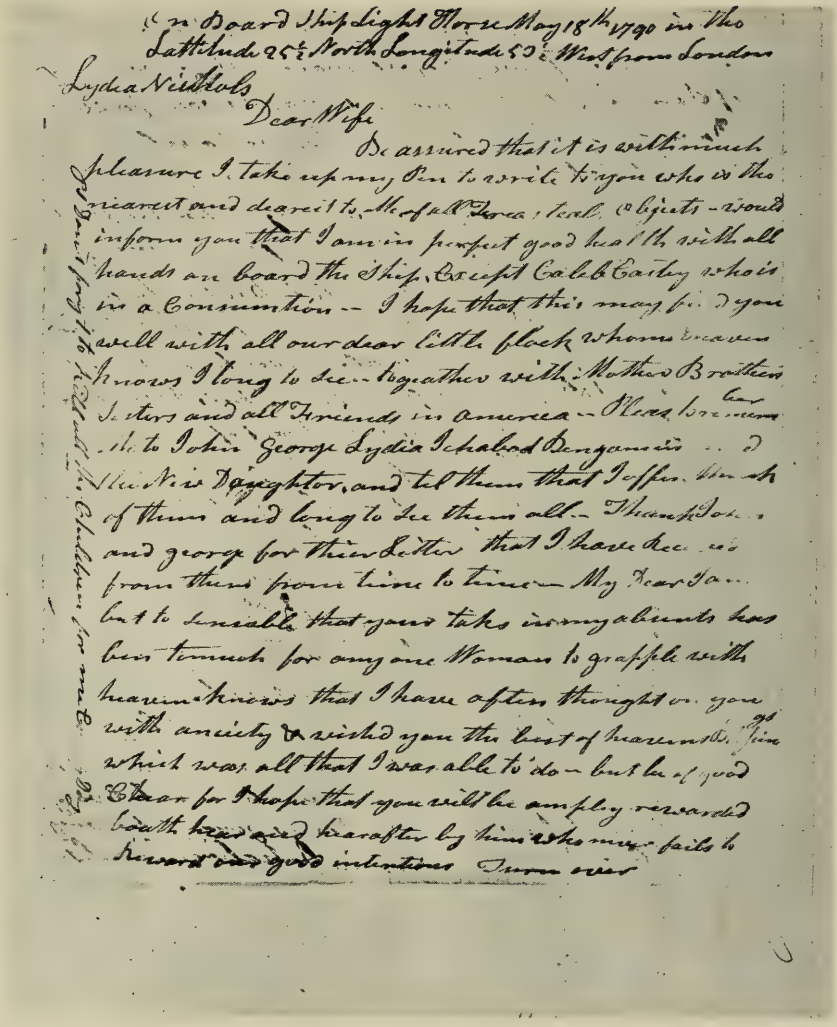


(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

JERATHMIEL PEIRCE — MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE, SALEM MARINE SOCIETY

(Courtesy, Peabody Museum of Salem)

SHIP *FRIENDSHIP*, PEIRCE AND WAITT, Painting by George Ropes (1805)



On Board Ship Light Horse May 18th 1790 in the Latitude 25° North Longitude 50° West from London

Lydia Nicholls

Dear Wife

Be assured that it is with much pleasure I take up my Pen to write to you who is the nearest and dearest to Me of all Terrestrial objects - would inform you that I am in perfect good health with all hands on board the Ship, except Caleb Carey who is in a Consumption - I hope that this may find you well with all our dear little flock whom heaven knows I long to see together with Mother Brothers Sisters and all Friends in America - Please to remember me to John George Lydia Ichabod Benjamin and the Nine Daughters, and tell them that I often think of them and long to see them all - Thank John and George for their Letter that I have received from them from time to time - My Dear Jane but too sensible that your take in my absents has been too much for any one Woman to grapple with heaven knows that I have often thought on you with anxiety & wished you the best of heavenly Bless which was all that I was able to do - but be of good Cheer for I hope that you will be amply rewarded both here and hereafter by him who never fails to Reward our good intentions Turn over

Capt. Ichabod to His Wife Lydia from the *Light Horse*

am sorrey to inform you that Thomas Nichols
Departed this life the 3th of February Last in the Streets
of Sunday, after a Sevear Nervas Fevour for 25
Days. he is the only man that we have lost Sine
we left Salem — our Ship is in very good order
only She Sails very dul indead. you Must not look
for us home until 10 or 15 Day after Captn Magee
who takes this Letter — I wrote to Brother Pierce to
get 1000 Pounds L. Money insurance for Me in my letter by Captn
Hodges: who has undoubtedly arived before this if
he is not arrived to have it done from this Place on
the best tarms he Can: to our Poart of Discharg
in america — Pleas to inform John and george that
I Should have Wrote to them but Captn Magee is
waiting — and tel them that I thank them for
Letters: and that it gives me much Pleasure to
hear so favourable account of their learning —
if we get home Safe I think that our voyage
will be good: you May Expect us by the 15 or
18 of June but Not much Sooner — Tel Lydia
that She need Not fear that the New Daughter will
Make Pappa Neglect her. Remember Me to Every
Body. Wife I remain My Dearest your Most Loving
Husband Ichabod Nichols

— Capt. Ichabod Nichols Aug 18. 1790

CAPT. ICHABOD TO HIS WIFE LYDIA *(continued)*

Portsmouth August 22nd 1788

My dear & Honoured Papa

I am now undertaking a task which you know I am but poorly able to perform. but as my dear Papa desires it I will with chearfulness perform it as well as I can. But I hardly know what to write. It is needless for me to tel you Sir that I am in good health & spirits for that my Mama I suppose will do. But I believe Papa I have been a pretty good Boy since you have been gon, & hope I shall be here still. I have been to School very constantly and have tried to learn as much as I could. Mama has seen me dance & tells me I learn very well. I Hope dear Papa these will find you in very good health. I long to see you sir and hope I shall in good time. Mean while pray sir write me and send me some good instructions which I shall ever be ready to obey. Please Papa to give my love to my cousens, and dont sir forget to bring me something pretty when you come home. I cant think sir of anything more to write. But I remain dear Papa with the utmost affection and esteem your most dutyful son

George. Nichols

GEORGE, THE FUTURE CAPTAIN, WRITES TO HIS FATHER

(From Old Papers)

"Milk. Any family wishing to be supplied with Milk, may have it from Ichabod Nichol's farm, brought to their doors. For further particulars apply at his House in Washington street." Nov. 14, 1820.

ICHABOD AS FARMER

At a meeting of the School Committee of the Town of Salem, at the Town Hall, on the 23d August, 1824, (being the day of the Annual Examination)—

Present, Hon. Joseph Story, Chairman, Leverett Saltonstall, John Glen King, Stephen White, Abel L. Pierson, Frederic Howes, William Silsbee, Benjamin Merrill, Nathan W. Neal, members of the Committee:

Voted unanimously, that this Book be presented to George Nichols a pupil in the Public Latin School, in testimony of the approbation of his Masters and of the Committee, for his diligence and proficiency in his studies, and for his exemplary conduct and strict attention to the regulations of the School.

Theodore Eames J. Story Chairman.
W. Kimble Hales Instructor

HIS GRANDSON GEORGE AS SCHOLAR

(Courtesy, Yankee, Inc. and Lawrence F. Willard, Photographer)

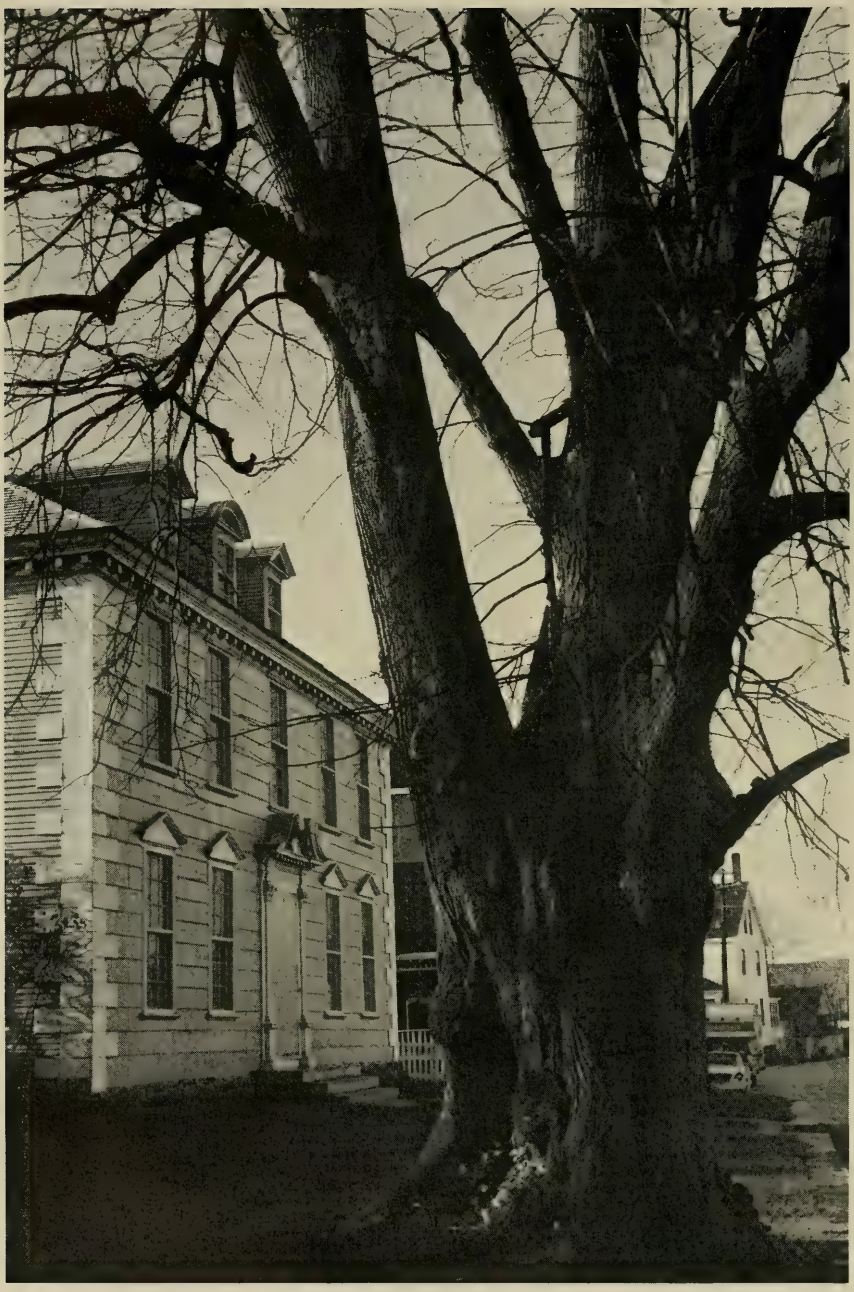
WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE, PORTSMOUTH, N. H.,
Once Owned by Capt. Ichabod

"N.B.You will tell Benj. I should have answered his Letter if time would have admited. I am sorry Lydia had not have been at home to have written as it would have afforded me much pleasure — but that was not the Reason for my not writing to her — I hope you will not make yourself anxious for my welfare — as I consider the Wirst over for this Voyage although I think it has been great.

Geo

I hope you will excuse this
scrawl as I have not time
to copy it. I am happy to say I
have never sailed with a more agreeable Man than
Cap. Bryant.

Mrs. Lydia Nichols
Salem"



(Courtesy, Yankee, Inc. and Lawrence F. Willard, Photographer)

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Mrs. Lydia Nichols
Salem"

Is it through some strange heritage of the word and the spirit that again and again in the long family annals a "George" and "John" are devoted brothers? So one generation later the son of Captain George, George Nichols, Jr. of Cambridge, a gentle and devoted scholar, knew a particular closeness for his younger brother John, whose dry happy humor complemented the older brother's overserious nature. This John's executive and humanitarian work in the theatre of the Civil War were of particular pride to George who, although ardently patriotic in feeling, yet occupied most of his life in the world of books and the intellect.

Again, several generations after, another George and John Nichols set out from their comfortable home in the great city of New York, to make one of the last sea voyages ever made on a square rigger to the Hawaiian Islands. The trip was made in the year 1901-2 on the Barque *Nuana,* a trading vessel owned by a Boston firm with family connections, Charles Brewer & Company. In this instance the trip would never have been made except for the devotion of the older brother George to the younger John; for John Treadwell Nichols, a student at Harvard, had been ill with threatened tuberculosis and the doctor said a long sea voyage was all that might restore him to health. The older brother, much against his inclination, undertook the trip, for although a yachtsman he could be ill in the calmest waters. It proved to be an unusually long and arduous sea-voyage of five months around Cape Horn. His own particular skills were required on the long voyage although his chief object was to accompany and watch over the delicate health of the younger brother John.

How much of the lives of our ancestors, as is revealed through their letters and diaries, tells of most youthful dreams and longings too often never fulfilled? Yet, as one reads, it is these very hopes and desires which lend these dreams a continuing life. So the meeting of the devoted brothers John and George, remains a most poignant, loving and living hope. Yes, the hope which they built between them a bridge to cross the vast loneliness of waters, seems to have a real and lasting form and structure for us today.

IV

BENJAMIN, JOSEPH AND DAVID

Benjamin Ropes Nichols born in Portsmouth in the year 1786 is the first of Ichabod's sons who has the distinction of never having gone to sea so far as we can learn from our chronicle. However, he appears to have been interested and able in his youth at the office and "compting house" of his father's maritime business.

Benjamin graduated with distinction from Harvard College in 1804 and became a prominent lawyer in Salem and Boston. His talents appear to have been first rate in business knowledge and handling. He was employed by corporations including Harvard College. In 1818 he was appointed by the Massachusetts Legislature to arrange the records of the Plymouth Colony, which were published in seventeen large volumes.*

There are few personal letters in the Nichols-Peirce collection† in Salem to or from Benjamin; there is one semi-business communication to his father, dated August 26, 1823, when Benjamin was evidently in charge of affairs for his father, both his ships and his milk farm. While there are few letters written by Benjamin demonstrating a family feeling or affection as is the case with the older Nichols brothers John and George, after his marriage and establishment in his own home in Boston there are many references in the Peirce and Nichols letters from Salem to congenial visits at Benjamin's Boston home. In 1813 Benjamin married Mary Pickering of Salem. Of his children, Benjamin, Jr. was a noted genealogist and his daughter Lucy Orne was married in 1838 to Jonathan Ingersoll Bowditch thus forming the Bowditch-Nichols connection.

In a letter from Benjamin at his Boston home to his brother Henry homesteading in Illinois (February 20, 1837), Benjamin reveals a distinct flair of family interest and "documentation"; this we may observe carried forward by his grandson Benjamin Nichols, and through the Bowditch line of his daughter by the distinguished

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*Willard Atherton Nichols, *Genealogical Records*
†*But see* B. R. Nichols and Bowditch Collections.

authority on *Heraldry* the late Dr. Harold Bowditch of Boston and Cambridge. The following letter of family news items written by Benjamin to his brother Henry in Illinois may be found chiefly interesting for this germ of genealogical interest which was developed in later generations, very notably in this branch of the Nichols-Bowditch family.

"Boston — Feb. 20, 1837

George Henry (Dr. Nichols) is still at Buffalo . . . He has been discouraged . . . can collect no money from his patients.

Charles Peirce has returned to Boston and opened his office.

Benjamin Peirce is quite distinguished as a Professor at the University. (Harvard)

Brother George's son Henry has opened a bookstore now in Boston.

George Nichols succeeds well in the bookstore . . .

B. R. Nichols"

Joseph Peirce Nichols, the next to the youngest son of Ichabod and Lydia was born in Salem in the year 1795, and died of the "virulent fever" in Lima, Peru in the year 1823.

The boy was named Joseph Peirce for his cousin Joseph Peirce, the oldest son of Jerathmiel and Sarah who had died of the fever in the West Indies in the year 1794 — not quite a year before the birth of his cousin. The death of Jerathmiel's oldest son had been a tragic blow to his parents, and our collection holds most pathetic letters from Jerathmiel announcing the loss of his son, and addressed to "my dear sister," actually his sister-in-law, Lydia Nichols, wife of Ichabod. Undoubtedly Lydia kept this tragedy closely in heart and mind, and was happy to be able to honor Jerathmiel and Sarah's son by the transferrence of his name to her own son, born within a year of his loss.

And Joseph Peirce Nichols was always called and referred to as "Peirce" in the Nichols family. One is led to contemplate once more "what's in a name?" for this son named in consolation for the grief of the parents of another was destined also to die while on a voyage many years later. So the love and grief of two mothers were finally pitted against the odd parallel spinning of the gray threads of Fate and the power of the gray ocean.

There are few mentions of "Peirce" Nichols subsequent to the birth announcement to his oldest brother John in Philadelphia, and later

mention of the "little boys" Henry and Joseph at play together in Salem.

Joseph Peirce Nichols was graduated from Harvard in the year 1813 — when 18 years of age. By 20 Joseph went to sea and we have one letter in the family collection, written in Montevideo on February 16, 1816. The letter is addressed to his father:

"Dear Sir:

I have the pleasure to inform you that matters remain pretty much as they were when we left Salem, that we are all well, and that I am very well pleased with the sea-faring life. *Friendship* is a fine brig, sails extremely well especially in light breezes on the wind when she swerves off and points very easy, it is difficult to get more from her than eight knots; she is marked in 9½; had not an opportunity to scrub during the passages. Sail tomorrow for Europe, wind and weather permitting with a full cargo of 12,000 hides — have purchased 1500 weight expect to lay in from 120 to 130 with the Officers. hope to improve about 250 of my dollars, cannot tell exactly as we have not yet received our Accounts from the Captain. Your demand against . . . is worth nothing here, I conversed with a man who had a demand of 3,000 L against him. He never got penny for it. Mr. M. Cobb of the firm of Stuart and M. Cobb (the house employed by Captain Frost) has favored me with the enclosed note respecting the markets here; if it is of any use to yourself or George or Mr. Saunders, or any of our friends in Salem, shall be extremely gratified.

Hoping yourself and all our friends are in good health,

I remain, etc.

Joseph P. Nichols

'P.S. Should any of our friends risk another vessel here, should recommend to them to contemplate sending her to Havana with a cargo of pork, beef, provided it could be procured. When we first arrived it could have been purchased at $2.00 the 100, prices in Havana as quoted from Philadelphia $12 to $15 the 100.

Joseph P. Nichols"

The letter above being the only one from Joseph Peirce Nichols and his absence at sea having extended at least from 1816 to the time of his death, it is natural to conclude that Joseph was not as closely bound to his home in Salem as his older brothers, John, George and

Henry. It is hard to believe that Ichabod would have neglected to write during all these years to any one of his absent children, and we may presume that young Joseph did not preserve letters from his father as the older boys evidently did. A hint of Joseph's manipulation of money, or an interest in "improving his dollars" (possibly through gambling?) is contained in the letter quoted. And if this had been so we may be quite sure that father Ichabod would have sent him letters of censure or advice.

We get word of Joseph Peirce Nichols in a letter of report on his father's ships and merchant ventures written by his brother Benjamin. Benjamin wrote his report in Salem, where he was evidently attending to the family and mercantile business while his father was away from home:

"Salem, Aug. 26, 1823

"Dear Sir

We had accounts from the *Friendship* today as late as May 2nd. She was then at Lima, but on the eve of sailing for Rio Janeiro. The accounts come by a waleman that touched at Lima. It seems, a day or two before, the *Friendship* was stopped by the Government upon suspicion of having money on board belonging to one Tracey, who was owing the Custom House. The difficulty, however, seems to have settled . . . Capt. Meek writes that the ship had been stopped but he says the Government are now satisfied their suspicions were groundless, and he shall proceed in a day or two for Rio. *Peirce will remain behind to get the residue of the cargo, and purchase another.* The prospects of the Herald are very favorable. The crops have again failed, and we may calculate upon her getting from Twenty to Thirty Dollars, for her flour a barrel. We have nothing further from the *Nautilus.*

Yours affectionately,
B. R. Nichols"

The next mention of Joseph Peirce is in the Diary of his nephew, young George Nichols, Jr., who wrote on November 17th 1823, "The *Friendship* arrived this morning — 56 days from Rio Janeiro. Uncle Peirce was left at Lima. Went off a board with Pa in the Customs House boat . . . " and on November 21st, " . . . we had letters from Uncle Henry of the *Nautilus,* announcing his arrival at N.Y. — 47 days from Elsinor. Went on board the *Friendship* in the C. H. boat.

The F. came up to the Crowninshield Wharf today — Dined and drank tea at Grandpa Nichols — Captain Meek called there this afternoon. He gave an account of the voyage, adventures, etc. Describing Lima he says it is one of the most beautiful as remarkable places on the globe . . . " The Diary continues with a happy mention of "Thursday — Nov. 28 — 1823 — Thanksgiving Day . . . After Meeting Lydia, John, Elizabeth, Henry and myself went to Grandpa Peirces (80 Federal Street) where we had a most excellent dinner . . . "

On Tuesday, April 13 — 1824 we learn from young George Nichols' Journal:

" . . . a letter from Timothy Ropes dated Lima, December, announces the death of Uncle Joseph Peirce Nichols in that city some time in Nov. last. It is a dreadful thing for his mother; as it came more unexpected to her than the others . . . " for, when the news of his sickness came, it is explained his mother, Lydia Nichols was ill "and it was deemed imprudent to communicate the worst to her, which was this: . . . that Captain Meek said he appeared to him in a *deep consumption,* and *he had no idea he would ever reach home* He was about 28 years of age. His complaint was undoubtedly of the liver. He left $5000, partly belonging to himself and partly to the owners of the *Friendship;* besides over $100 belonging to John and me; together with other adventures which will proably be all lost as the merchant, in whose hands it is, is a most *consummate villain.* In splitting a stock of wood this A. M. Henry (his brother) cut a deep gash in the side of his foot, with which he will probably be *laid up* for some time."

And on Friday, August 6th 1824, George reports:

" . . . called at Grandpa Peirce's for Lydia this evening. By a letter that Grandpa Nichols (Ichabod) has received from Lima, it appears that Uncle J. P. N. (Joseph Peirce Nichols) died in that city on the 28th of October last, having been more or less unwell ever since his first arrival. Mention is made of the manner of his death — that he appeared resigned and in full possession of his faculties, his last words being 'O Lord! — O Lord! — O Lord!' He was interred in a small Island (San Lorenzo) about 9 miles from Callao, that being his wish — He was abroad 3 or 4 days previous to his death, attending to his concerns as usual . . . "

So the accounts of the last months of Joseph Peirce Nichols in the tropical port so far away from home, and finally his burial on the un-

known, tiny Pacific island months before the family at home in Salem were aware of his death, forms another poignant story. For the most part young George's Diary records a happy and homely sequence of days often unaware of tragedy as it transpires, but he lived after all in the city of sea-men, where thoughts and telescopes were of necessity concentrated on the all-powerful Ocean!

David Nichols — Youngest Son of Ichabod. We would believe that the entrance of Ichabod's youngest son David to Harvard so long after his brother Ichabod's residence there must have been a real milestone to his father, as David was the youngest of the family and apparently especially loved by all. One would think also that he must have been a brilliant boy, entering Harvard at the age of fourteen, when his father wrote to him as follows:

"September 1811

"Dear David:

"You are now about going from home to reside some time at a Place where the eyes of the most enlightened part of mankind will attentively observe and criticize upon your conduct.

"I am firmly persuaded that a good education (which is a fortune in a man) is much better than a large estate with a man, as the latter takes to itself wings and flies away, whilst the former if duly improved will always remain with him an inexaustible source of comfort and support and happiness to himself and all around him. Should you be so fortunate as to be in sentiment with me with respect to the foregoing, I am confident that nothing will be wanting on your part to make the best of the present opportunities at Cambridge, and that you will come out from the University that useful and thinking character so much wished for by

Your sincere friend and affectionate Parent

I.N.

"P.S. Don't fail to write me once a fortnite, or oftener if convenient."

We may feel in the affectionate postscript a certain sadness and anxiety on the part of the ever careful and affectionate father, for David was the last to leave home of his very large family. And so we may learn with an especial sadness that David, the namesake of Ichabod's father whom he so deeply revered, did not live to fulfill Ichabod's final hope.

We note in the handwriting of his father, and again of his older brother George, as entered in the family Bible that:

"David Nichols died May 19, 1814, aged seventeen of consumption while attending Harvard College."

Notes in Bible of George Nichols and Sally Peirce Nichols:

> "John Nichols my brother died at Pointe-á-Pitre,
> Guadeloupe June 8 1798 at ae 22.
> My brother, David Nichols, died of consumption
> May 19, 1814 AE 17 — (at Harvard)"

The death by consumption of David Nichols when but seventeen and in his third year of college was a severe blow to the devoted parents. Unfortunately we have no letters directly from young David's pen but he must have been a brilliant boy. He followed closely in the footsteps of his older brother Ichabod, who had also entered Harvard at fourteen and then gone on to a brilliant career in the ministry, and in authorship. We have the following tragic letters from young David's parents written to this older scholar of the family in Portland telling of the last period of his younger brother David's illness, and shedding much light on the boy's character:

"Salem
April 15, 1814

"Dear Ichabod:

This will inform you that I am well, as are also the whole of our family and friends in Salem except your brother David who is daily growing weaker and more and more humble and resigned to the Will of Heaven — his time is mostly spent in devotion and in returning thanks to God for his manifold goodness towards him, particularly for his revealed Will in the Gospel of the promise of salvation thru his dear Son Jesus Christ his Lord — there is nothing which ever falls from his lips which borders on murmuring or repining at this Situation but all is humility and patience, constantly returning thanks to God and his redeemer as becomes a pious and a devout Christian for the many blessings received — particularly for that he has been brought to see and to feel the vanity of all earthly comforts and to be led to place his only Faith and Hope in the merits of his blessed Saviour. He also prays that he may be spared from being afflicted with severe pain while he may be continued in this life and at the hour of Death. I am

charmed with his observations upon the vanities of this world, and the humble Hopes of the blessings that he entertains that he may receive through his Saviour in another. His letters lately wrote to some of his Classmates bespeaks him to be a Christian indeed and without guile. Will you be so good as to drop him a line that may serve to establish his hope of a better world and to comfort him whilst he may remain in this — your other letters seemed to cheer him. If ever true piety was in the breast of anyone, I do believe that it excels in the breast of your brother to an unusual degree. David sends his tender love to yourself and to his dear sister Dorothea (Ichabod's wife Dorothea Gilman) in which Mama and myself join him. Most affectionately yours,

Ichabod Nichols"

"Your dear brother has joined the church — he observed he thought it his duty to his saviour who has done so much for us — he told me a few days since that he supposed that he had but little time to live. He should, therefore, divest himself of all worldly cares. I told him I hope he continued to have peace and comfort in his mind — His reply was "I know that my Redeemer liveth — and am assured that He will not cast me off." After having a distressful time his mouth was filled with praise to his God for giving him repentance for his sins and to believe in his Saviour. We never hear him murmur but often laments that he dont feel more humble and more love and gratitude to his Saviour. I would write more would time permit.

Your loving mother,

L. Nichols"

Notes from the Genealogical Record of
Willard Atherton Nichols
Published Redlands, California, January 1st, 1911
Concerning the Public Career of Ichabod Nichols

He took an active part in the most important undertakings for the welfare and prosperity of Salem, although he never was an office-holder in town or state affairs. He was a charter member of a corporation formed in 1796, and on 17 April, 1797, incorporated under the style of the "Proprietors of the Salem and Danvers Aqueduct" for the "purpose of conveying fresh water by subterranean pipes into the towns of Salem and Danvers," the quaint description of its purpose as read today indicating that this company was a pioneer in the building of aqueducts in this country.

On June 14, 1814, a committee of three of the Proprietors of this corporation was appointed to devise means for the increase in the water supply of which Captain Nichols was one.

He was a member, number 69, of the Marine Society of Salem, instituted in 1766, and a charter member, number 2, of the East India Marine Society of Salem which was founded October, 1799. Both societies are now in existence. His signature, the second in order, can be seen on the framed roster of the last named society in its rooms in Salem. He was its third President, holding the office for the years, 1808, 1809 and 1810.

In 1801, he was one of those who subscribed towards the grading and ornamentation of Salem Common, and he was for many years an officer of the old Salem and Boston turnpike, and he very capably superintended for many years the repairs to the road.

Another interesting fact, also probably showing consideration for his mother's views (Quaker) as to that rite, is that the first entry that can as yet be found of the baptism of their children is on the 13th August, 1798, when Ichabod, born 1784; Benjamin, born 1786; Charlotte, born 1788 and David, born 1797 were baptized in the old North Church in Salem.

Lydia Nichols, the wife of Ichabod, after her return to Salem became a prominent member of the Old North (Congregational) Church. She was one of the organizers, and for many years a manager of the "Seamen's Orphan and Children's Friend Society" of Salem.

Ichabod was old; in fact, he lived to be ninety years old. A man's age and courage for the type of father that Ichabod was may be measured by his children. Age or youth is not only in himself but in his children's lives, and Ichabod had lost a good number of his eleven — John so long ago and so far distant from Salem and the Turnpike Farm that he could scarcely remember him, in the Indies, and all that had made his life there. But he loved John, perhaps more deeply than any of the others, for after all John was his first-born, born in his very early marriage and he had to leave him when he set out on his march to join Washington's army. This had been the hardship, the true hardship, perhaps even harder than leaving his young wife Lydia, but he had comforted himself by thinking "My John will do things worthy of this when his day comes. I could not go and so not be able to tell John when his time comes that I had left all to defend my young country, yes to make this country free and good and safe for my son." And John had shared something of his high homecoming youth with him, as the others could not. John was there to welcome him, large-eyed when he first came in the door and his arms held John as they held Lydia his young wife. John had grown with the life he was building, making safe and beautiful for Lydia and her children, first in Salem, then in beautiful Portsmouth as his business flourished and his commands increased.

How proudly he had written to recommend John to Mr. Anthony's Counting House: "My son has helped me already in the grocery business. I have been able to leave it to him and his younger brother George when I have been away on my voyages," but John, loving, dutiful, dependable, who should one day be the foremost to carry on the family name and fortunes — John, sickened, lay dying of a fever in that far-away tropical Island! and the far-away Miss Peters — she who had loved John only second to himself — was she dead too, or was she perhaps married? He had never heard. Or was she waiting, always waiting for John, yes as he had been waiting, waiting, waiting always; and now was the time nearing when they should meet again?

Then there was George, but George was no longer quite the same. George had failed, and had to leave his proud commands. He was now an auctioneer, and the most he made was in auctioning old ship-hulls in the city. George was no longer young. The cares of a numerous family, the loss of his wife, the young wife of his youth, had weighed

heavily upon him, his son George's head was white and his step was becoming heavy.

There was David, David the hope of his older years, David, his last-born, his youngest for whom not only he but the older children had the most tender feeling, David for whom he had wished all that he himself might have dreamed for his own youth, David for whom he had so much hope. And David was dead long years ago, a youth at Harvard; this was perhaps an only less poignant loss than that of the eldest, John.

His first Lydia had left him. After all, she had gone in the normal age of dying for a strong woman, but he, why had he so long lingered?

To be sure the second Lydia, his companionable, capable daughter kept his house. She waited on him, she talked with him, he was not alone: but Lydia, the daughter he had himself so rightly, so capably and firmly settled in her life and career, whom he had guarded from a headstrong, foolish marriage years ago. She had instead married the brilliant, lovable and good, young son of his former marching companion Jerathmiel Peirce. Yes, again Lydia he had been unable to save from disaster, for Lydia's Benjamin had died years before, leaving her a widow, and now nothing to do but return to Salem and care for him, her old father. Certainly she was loving and thoughtful and all that a daughter could and should be, but he was not deceived. Some daughters might pull the wool over their aged father's eyes, but not his!

And Jerathmiel, companion of his youth, had died long years ago, of heartbreak for having had to give up his beautiful house, the family house where Ichabod's son George had been married over a quarter century since, to the eldest daughter and head of the house of her father Jerathmiel. The blow had killed Jerathmiel. It had taken him as clearly as though a bullet had pierced him that first winter they were soldiers together in Washington's army. So why wait, wait a lifetime for this most cruel wound? But Jerathmiel and his family were not of the breed to suffer hardship from the blows of love or fortune. They were perhaps of a finer, certainly of a more sensitive nature, tho' he doubted this, than the Nichols family. The Nichols did best in ill fortune. It acted as a spur to them. He and his sons were of a tougher fibre, but after all, to what end?

So George in Salem, secure by now in his business, Ichabod a beloved minister with a devoted Parish and following in Maine,

Charlotte married to a fine and wealthy man, Lydia too cumbered for her own brilliant mind and spirit to be waiting on him instead of on her rightful husband, the charming Benjamin who was gone too young! Yes, Lydia had suffered many cares and now she should be free.

Ichabod himself could hardly see, yet there was still something that he could do for one of his children, Henry, the widower, making his own difficult life now in far-away Prairie, Illinois. Ichabod took up his pen, in accordance with his old custom, to write another letter to his distant son:

"Salem May 21, 1837

"Dear Henry

It is a long time since I have Received a letter or have heard from you from what cause I am at a loss to account unless you are sick which I hope is not the case. Perhaps you have wrote and the letters have miscarried . . . I do not remember ever before to have heard of so much complaining with Men in Business as at this time for want of money some of our greatest Merchants are Failing dayley for five hundred thousand to Ten Million of Dollars in New York onley it is said that more than 200 Merchants have Failed for the amount of more than one Hundred Million of Dollars and more than Fifty have Faild in Boston for Ten Millions Dollars. At Present in Salem we have but a few Failers in this Town or City. Your Sister Lydia is now in New York I expect that she will be in Salem by the first of June next and will take her Daughter Elizabeth with her as Housekeeper. Pray do not fail to write me often and give me every information possible respecting your situation and future prospect and what is the general opinion of the late measures has been persued under Jackson administration. . . . I would inform you that I am almost blind and Deaf also and that life is become wearisome to me but I ought not to pine as I have good reason to be thankful to that kind Providence that has led me so comfortable through so long and stormy life and that to injoy life in its fullest that we must meet with disapointments. Believe me to be affectionately yours,

Ichabod Nichols"

And the light was going or gone not only for Ichabod's failing eyes, but with the practical end of the great era of sail and the merchant ships; it was gone from the very element which had borne and made

Ichabod's fortunes on their proud voyages. This was the true twilight which Ichabod discerned more than his own failing eyesight; as is the way with the strongest man, when he dies his world dies with him, and so it was with Ichabod.

Ichabod Nichols, born in the year 1749 died in his birthplace, Salem, just ninety years later in the year 1839, and his children and descendants to this day remember his name with its old Biblical meaning, "The Glory of God has Departed!"

As one learns of Ichabod, his life and times, the name and its meaning appear prophetic. Clearly the "Glory of God" was with Ichabod during his own lifetime, as it sustained many strong men rooted in the strength and verities of both the sea and the land in these earlier years of our country's founding; but with Ichabod's departure this "Glory" waned in his family's souls and fortunes as in that of many another strong family of his era.

Henceforth the succeeding generations did not know God as Ichabod and his sons had known Him; met alone, face to face, on the high seas, strong to give or to take their lives, their loves, their fortunes. Theirs was an objective and all-powerful God, known and seen in the lightning, in the gale, and providing at the end peace, tranquility and sure rewards for the brave sailor who had risked all — peace in the calm blessing and retirement of the green meadows and gardens and the secure home which their childhood had known — or if not here, surely in a similar Paradise above!

So "Ichabod's grandsons" no longer met God face to face on the challenging seas or knew the physical uplift of finding "the rainbow in the cloud in the Day of Rain."

V

HENRY IN ILLINOIS

HENRY NICHOLS WE MAY DESIGNATE as the eldest of the younger group of the Ichabod Nichols' children, since he was born after his father Ichabod's return to Salem in 1793. He had a most colorful and interesting life, in which he showed an outstanding distinction and activity from his babyhood to his death at over seventy years of age.

Henry is first spoken of by his oldest brother John, when at his father's house in Salem John wrote in a letter to the next older brother already absent at sea: "I think I have never seen a finer child than Henry." And again he exclaims with pleasure resembling parental triumph: "Henry goes by himself now!" So, from the very first Henry appears to have "gone by himself" in most interesting fashion. In spite of the warnings of his older brother George, who advised young Henry, as the other younger brothers that "the sea-faring life is a dog's life", Henry went to sea well before he was twenty.

Rounding the Cape of Good Hope on a passage to India, and probably to China beyond, on his first or second voyage out Henry wrote a long letter home:

"Calcutta March 12th, 1811

"Dear and Respected Parent,

I now drop a few lines announcing to you our safe arrival at Calcutta after a passage of 133 days and hope that you with Mama, all our Family and Friends, have enjoyed perfect Health since I left Salem as I have, except that I was seasick much longer than it was my expectation to be, for it continued on me until I had been forty days, and did not leave me then entirely. I believe I have given satisfaction to Capt. . . . . to all the officers and crew on board the Ship since I left Salem and shall endeavor likewise to give the same to Mr. Stansfield on shore who is a very fine Man & likewise the Captain with the Officers & Crew. With Respect to the Property aboard, Mr. Mansfield has sold the Dollars for 9½ rupees advance & the Copper he has not sold yet, but I believe some of the Merchants here offer'd a price little above the Invoice but as there is no more in the Market nor any expected, I think he will not sell it at present for that price.

Our Banyan Runchandy & Co. I find . . . to be fine men & if the Ship (the company are building) should come out here I would recommend this House to them. With Respect to what you have ordered for your Investment home, Mr. Marshfield says that Bandannahs are brighter here now than has been known for a number of years before and likewise that there is not any Indigo of the first quality in the Market, but if there should happen to be any he says there is little doubt but that it might be obtained at the price you mentioned in your orders. On my return to Salem I shall hearken entirely to your advice as I have no doubt but that a Friend so very dear to me as you are, will give me the best Instruction that lies in his power, as I am now young and do not know exactly what course will be most beneficial for me to pursue, therefore I shall trust entirely to your judgment. The Shawl which Cousin Betsy Peirce has ordered I have no doubt but that a handsome one may be obtained for 60 Dollars but not of the first quality and the gown Patterns I have yet tried to procure but I think they may be obtained pretty reasonable & likewise the Cotton Handkerchiefs & the Muslin which Mamma has ordered, but the Flag & Bandannahs which Sister Lydia has ordered, I think it will not do to get them because they are so very high. My adventure in the *Factor* I leave entirely with you to do the best you can & if the Ship the Company are building has gone before I return (if they are willing) I wish you would put in a small adventure for me & I will pay you when I return. As my time is but short to write I conclude with the hopes of once more joining our hands in love & friendship & wishing you to give my love to Mamma, Aunt Jane, all my Brothers & Sisters, Nephews, Nieces, Uncles, Aunts & Couzins & especially to Couzin Sarah N. Ropes who was so good in making some clothes for me before I left Salem.

"We have been busy this day counting the Money & find yours to fall short a few Dollars only but my few turns out to be right. Please present my thanks to Brother George for his goodness in giving me the Writing Desk for I find it to be very convenient & I wish you would tell Brother Peirce & David never to follow the road I have taken for it is worse than a dog's life & I do not think that 100 Dollars would tempt me to go again to Sea & that this may find you enjoying perfect health & all the Family is the Sincere wish of your affectionate Son

"Henry Nichols

"N.B. Please excuse this Letter for the very bad writing as I expect the Brig to Sail today for Boston.

H. N."

In spite of the rolling of the ship which must have afforded an unquiet writing desk, the letter quoted below, is written in a fine, even and cultivated hand. One cannot but wonder whether Henry might not have distinguished himself as a scholar at Harvard had he taken the opportunity which his overgenerous father was always ready to provide, as he had for Ichabod. The second letter recording Henry's seafaring is that addressed to his younger brothers at home, Peirce* and David, and was written from the Cape of Good Hope in July 1813, when Henry's ship had been empressed by the British (in the War of 1812) and Henry himself was a prisoner there:

"Cape of Good Hope, Cape Town, July 20, 1813

"Dear and Affectionate Brothers

Having now an opportunity of writing you by the Mail for England, the *Rambler* in Convoy, I have to inform you that we were taken and brought in here by the Mosley Transport, and arrived in Table Bay on the 22d of February all well, and on the 27th were sent on shore where we still remain, not getting 1/3 part enough to live on, being only about 20 cents per day so that Mr. Bryant and myself have been obliged to draw a small bill on the owners to maintain ourselves here.

"In your last letter you informed me the *Factor* was to sail the day you wrote me for Rio Janeiro which I received by Capt. Bruce at Manilla together with the other accompanying letters, but I hoped the next letter will not inform me of her capture though I have every reason to expect it, for I hardly think whether there is any American merchantman crosses the ocean without being picked up, and when I shall have the pleasure of joining hands and my dear friends, God only knows, for there is not a prospect at present of getting from here, and from what I can learn the Admiral is determined not to send us away until he has orders from England, but I hope that there will be something out soon to that effect, for if they do not send us from here in the course of 3 or 4 months, or give me up some of my property, I must go to prison and fare with the sailors, unless I sell my clothing, for I have disposed of everything else that I saved when we were

*Joseph Peirce Nichols

captured, and Mr. Bryant and myself intended not to draw any more money.

"As agreeable as Peirce may think a seaman's life to be, I should suppose that he had rather be at college now where he can hear from his friends daily than to be here in this situation, where he could not hear from them once a year, but as disagreeable as it may be, I will endeavor to brave it out as well as I can, and perhaps I shall see all my Friends enjoying as good health as they did when I left home.

"Having nothing else that I can communicate to you, I wish you would give my love to Mama and Sis, Aunt Jane, all Brothers and Sisters, Friends and Connexions (Mr. and Mrs. Wyman) and that I shall see them enjoying as good health as I do at present.
J. P. and David Nichols

Salem

"N. B. Please write in respects to Colonel and Mrs. P —
"Your affectionate brother Henry Nichols"

Little exactly is known of Henry's sea-faring life, and as reminders of it we have only this quoted letter, and a small worn, leather-bound Bible which was printed in Edinburgh before the year 1800. It shows evidence of much handling and reading, and bears inside the back cover, again in beautiful, small handwriting, "Henry Nichols at Sea — 12,137 miles from home."

In the years following his early voyages, Henry appears to have returned to Salem, probably to work in the counting house or other businesses connected with the shipping interests of his father. We know also that he was married to Sarah Hardy of Salem, that this couple left no descendants, and that his young wife died in the year of 1828 at the age of twenty-nine years. A concrete and touching remnant of this union is the exquisite china — a white and gold Chinese Export set of chocolate or tea cups with the accompanying chocolate pot, sugar bowl and creamer, and a tea service, the cups without handles. This

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*In the family house at 80 Federal Street in Salem was found this old china meticulously wrapped in old newspapers unbroken and unchipped. Apparently Henry had left it in storage in the care of his trusted nephew John who eventually became owner through holding interest for his daughters of the House — the family homestead.

china was undoubtedly bought by Henry on a voyage to China. Each piece of this old china is in quite perfect condition after more than one-hundred years and each piece is marked with the initials H. S. N. The H undoubtedly standing for Henry, the S for Sarah, and the N for the surname Nichols, this style of marking for wedding china or silver having been the custom of that day.*

Just what occupied Henry, or where he lived after his young wife's death is not exactly told or known in the family notes and letters. In any case it is to be presumed that he stayed in the neighborhood of Salem, and probably right at home in the always hospitable home of his father, or perhaps his brother George, since George's son John and his Uncle Henry had become by the year 1829 the greatest friends. This friendship between the two generations lasted all their lives, and was amusingly referred to in a letter of John's sister Lydia:

Uncle and John . . . stayed at the stove, on one or two very stormy days, and cooked sausages in a shovel, they both eat out of one dish; Uncle had a penknife and a pair of dividers for a fork, and John had a caseknife and sail needle.

This letter indicates that the uncle and nephew were employed and worked happily together, either in the shipyard or counting house.

On May 29, 1835 John was married to his distant cousin, Sarah Augusta Leach. It is very probable that this marriage robbed Henry of a certain close companionship on which the young widower may well have depended, for in early 1836, a few months after John's marriage, we find in a family letter:

"I am sorry to hear of Uncle's determination to go to the West." So wrote another nephew, Henry Peirce Nichols, of Boston, evidently not so close in understanding as nephew John: "I hoped that the 'fever' had gone from him, however, he of course knows his own wants and interests more than I do. I wish him all the success and happiness imaginable, and hope he will find it a land flowing with milk and honey, and blessed with as genial skies as travelers represent." In spite of evident family regret, for Henry appears to have been a universal favorite, he left for the still comparatively unknown and unexplored "prairie land" of Southwestern Illinois.

The series of letters from Henry Nichols in Illinois seem to me a most important chapter of this family chronicle; for in these letters the

"Family Vine" first turns toward the West, naturally and picturesquely following the universal trend of the time. Moreover, Henry was a pioneer, as his sea-faring forebears of the last three generations; typical of the adventurous spirit of this time he did not linger on the deserted wharves but set out overland for the great realms of unexplored country, of new hamlets and villages, of new thoughts and men. Certainly it was not old Salem, but there were weddings and risings; there were rabbits and game on the prairies, and the strawberries and wild flowers were abundant.

Most of the letters written by Henry in Illinois from September of 1836 until his return to Salem, ever an irresistible magnet, are written to his well-loved and sympathetic nephew John — a few addressed to his aged father Ichabod. Ichabod's prompt replies show his yearning for his far adventuring son in a land which he himself did not know, or understand.

"North Prairie, Morgan County, Ill.
May 4, 1836

"Dear John N.

Here I am, where I started for, in the far West State of Illinois among the Suckers, having initiated myself as one of them by purchasing 200 Acres of their Prairie Soil at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per acre, the Soil is all that it has been represented, a thick black loam without any stones, & from 3 to 5 feet deep. I think without exception it is the best land I ever saw, & I have no doubt that one acre of it would produce, more than 5 Acres such as Wares, it requires no manure, & I saw a man ploughing today in a field which has been broken up 14 years & not a particle of manure on it, & the soil is as black now as a coal, all the difficulty I think I shall have will be the fencing which is made of Rails & at this season of the year (as the Farmers are about their crops) very difficult to be obtain'd, however, I think I shall break up about 50 acres this year & fence it, & if possible build a log Hut but I think I shall board with Mr. Dutch until I can get under way, but I can tell you it is pretty hard work for me to think of pitching my tent out in the prairies, with scarcely a House in sight, but I suppose I shall soon get used to it.

"I wish that you or some of my Friends could be out here about the first of June & see the prairies, the one on which I have bought my land is 24 miles E. & W. & 6 to 12 M. N. & S. without a tree or

scarcely a shrub & nearly as level as a house floor. It is covered with Flowers (many of which are now in blossom) & strawberries abounds, for the Prairies are literally covered with them, & as for game the woods abound with deer, wild turkeys, geese, & the prairies with prairie Hens, but I think I shall have very little time for hunting at present, though if you will come & see me, I will give you as many wild turkeys as you want, but the principal food of my brother suckers is Hog & Hominy, (Indian bread & Bacon) which is nearly their only food, but if I live on it much longer, I shall begin to squeal pretty loud for I abhor the sight of it, I believe they think veal or sheep is poisonous, otherwise I should think they would have it, for it abounds here.

"I have not yet been able to travel much on account of the bad state of the Roads, but I have bought a Posinante, & as soon as the mud dries up shall set off on an expedition farther north, but I am fearful the day has gone by, when good entries can be made, as there are so many speculators in the markets, that any land that is worth entering is immediately taken up by them.

"You must write soon, for I long to hear from home, you must let me know everything that has happened since I left & when I get a good opportunity, & have time I will give you a journal of my haps & mishaps, since I left home. Please give my love to Augusta & tell her she must be a good girl & to Father & to all the Family & remember me to Chamberlain. Mr. Abijah Chase & everybody that think me worth notice, & you will much oblige,

"Your old affectionate uncle,

H. Nichols

"P.S. Capt. Roundy can inform you about the land & the prospects.

H. N."

"North Prairie, July 17, 1836

"My Dear Nephew,

Your kind & truly grateful letter of the 11th of June was duly received, and I am very glad to hear that Roundy has arrived & that he was so much pleased with this part of the country though it is very different now from what it was when he was here, everything looks beautiful, the prairies are cover'd with flowers & vegetables of all kinds in great abundance. Strawberries are all gone, but a few weeks since they were very abundant, & I think the finest I ever saw, my land abound with them, & I had some noble feasts of them. I have

likewise several fine patches of Hazel trees & in the course of a few months, I have no doubt I can pick 100 bushels of nuts, as the trees are very full.

"Since Capt. Roundy left, I have bought me a house 16 by 20 ft. 1 story high, and last week raised it on my land on one of the handsomest mounds on the North prairie, surrounded with 160 acres of as fine land as I ever saw, 120 of which belong to me, the remainder of our entry is low for excellent grazing, and take our entry together I think it preferable to any land of the same quantity on this prairie, I bought since we enter'd 80 acres at $2 per acre adjoining our entry, besides 40 acres of timber but I have not yet examined the timber, though from what I can learn, there is probably a quarry of Stone or Coal on it, either of which would be more valuable than timber. I should like to enter another 40 acres of timber adjoining mine which is very good, but my funds seem rather short, & I must wait a little longer, it is worth to any person $5 an acre & I wish I owned it.

"As soon as I can get my House in readiness I shall probably send for my things, as in case I settle (of which there is very little doubt) I shall probably never return to Salem again, as it will not only be inconvenient but very expensive, & I feel in hopes that some of the family which can afford it better than I can will come & see me. I wish a few good families would come & settle here, & I have no doubt we should be able to find them some good entries in our neighborhood though most of the land is taken up, but I think I know an entry of 5 or 600 acres of excellent high prairie in this neighborhood, that can be made, & if I had the money I would enter it tomorrow.

"There has lately been a town laid out on the 16th or School Section called, Philadelphia, the lots were sold a few days since & went very high, & the purchasers I understand intend building, if they do, I think the land in the vicinity would immediately rise, as the location of the town, I consider, to be far preferable to either Springfield or Jacksonville, and land within 7 miles of either of those places cannot be bought today for less than from $20 to 50 an acre and Gov. Duncan a short time since bought a farm within 3 miles of Jacksonville at $100 an acre, & I do not know why the land in this vicinity equally as well situated & in many cases superior should not be equally valuable, but if any person feels disposed to give me $5 an acre, I will sell it though that is the least I will take for it, as I consider it very cheap at that price.

"Will you have the goodness to ask Capt. Roundy whether (as we have entered our land together) it would not be better for each to give a deed for his half, in case of accident, or in case I should want to sell, if he thinks it best will you get me his deed for my 200 acres, & forward it by first opportunity as it will be necessary to have it recorded at Jacksonville & I will make his out & have it recorded & forward it by first chance. It will be necessary that his wife signs it & have it acknowledged before a Justice. I think it is best to word it undivided half of 200 acres, Capt. R. has a copy of the entry & can make it by that. Tell Capt. R. the wet 80 acres which we refused to enter, has lately been taken up & considered an excellent entry, he would hardly be able to find it now, as it is as dry as any on the prairie.

"You mention you have been called upon to subscribe your mite for a church here, I think the project rather premature, though I am very glad that we are not forgotten in your great City, though if we can get one it would be an excellent thing to increase the value of our land, & if it could be thrown open to all denominations it might induce people to settle round us.

"If you have money enough of mine in your hands I would thank you to pay Seccomb's bill, but I entirely forgot it when I left.

"I think you don't judge very correctly when you intimate that I shall get tired of your long letters. I can tell you Johnny that if it was times longer it would be so much more grateful, therefore don't cut your letter short on my account, & I hope as you have promised that the next Augusta will give me a specimen of her handwriting, but as the Yankees say, "I guess you will wish the Squire to Guinea before you asked him to write often, but condescend to read this (if it is worth reading) & will agree the next one shall be shorter, but I have not told you half I intended though I shall defer the rest to another opportunity.

"Please give my best love to Father, Augusta & all the rest of the Family & you will much oblige

"Your Affectionate Uncle & Friend,
H. Nichols"

In the following Henry shows that he is still interested in affairs back in Salem:

"North Prairie, Sept. 21, 1836

"My Dear Nephew,

Your kind affectionate & truly acceptable letter of the 17th of August was duly received, accept my sincere congratulations for the addition you have received to your little & interesting family, but you mention him as my little namesake though I see you have tacked on your name, but I suppose it is all the same — you or me — however, it is well intended, & I feel much oblig'd to you for the honor, please kiss the little fellow for me, & tell him perhaps when he gets to be as old as Pa, he may possibly see the old fellow he was partly named for, & likewise give my love to Augusta, & tell her now, that she has assumed the title of Ma, I hope if she has an idle hour to spare, she will write me a good long letter, & let me see if she has improved in her handwriting since the last I received, & Pa you must answer this letter as soon as possible, for now I suppose I must drop the title of Johnny except to the young Mr. Nichols.

"I am much oblig'd to you for calling on Roundy but I cannot see what objection there can be in giving a deed for an undivided half, there is a great difference in the land, & to particularize any part would hardly be fair on either side, if he thinks that necessary perhaps it would be best to let it stand until his Brother comes out. I have offer'd him half of all I have bought, since he left, if he does not take it, I think I shall have mine set off & cut as near the middle as possible. The certificate might answer the place of a deed, but it does not define the quantity of land each is entitled to, & I think there ought to be, (in case of an accident to either) something to show, that we are equally interested. Capt. Rogers enter'd 80 acres of timber, half for me, & he gave me a deed for an undivided half. Perhaps Roundy may think it unnecessary, but if he is willing to give me a paper stating that I own half I will forward him one to the same purpose immediately.

"I am sorry to hear that Mr. Devereux & his son have fail'd, though it is no more than I expected but I cannot conceive it possible that a person can lose money on land so good as this at $1¼ per acre, especially in a new country growing so fast as this State does, the only difficulty I think in the course of ten years will be, that there will not be land enough for the great rush of emigrants that are continually flowing into this state. The Land Offices are continually thronged & it is no uncommon thing to receive at the land office in Springfield from

$100 to 300000 a Month, & this at only one Office & there are four or five in Quincy the receipts are much larger.

"I am glad to hear that Salem folks have got upon excitement now which will probably profit them something, I mean building a Railroad, for I think they have been engaged in foolish excitements long enough, oftentimes wish myself there. I long to see how it looks & how the new City appears. I have never heard who your Mayor is, or whether you have got any, the title has been added since I left.

"By your letter you seem to laugh at my new establishment 16 by 20 I feel quite proud of it for it will just hold me & one room for an old Bachelor is large enough. I have a fire place in my bed room, which answers the purpose of a Kitchen, but if those great boxes & trunks come out, they will have to take up their residents on the prairie, for the Hall will hardly hold them & me too, but as I am situated near the road, I have no doubt, I shall frequently have to stand landlord, for if it was not half as large it would be the same in any case.

" . . . You seem, in Salem, to be always in a broil about Ministers. I should think Upham would find something better to do, than accusing so good a man as Mr. Braser of drunkeness. I should think if such had been the case, Upham would not have been the first genius to have found it out.

"I see by my Papers that Dr. Channing & others in Boston have worked themselves up in a great ferment because the people in Alton shot Lovejoy. I think it very foolish in so wise a man as Dr. Channing to trouble himself about such things. Lovejoy & his Gang were the first aggressors, fired the first shot, & killed the first man, & he deserves Death, he knew before his Press arrived what the determination of the people were, & if he had acted up to his profession & instead of heading a mob, had endeavored to keep peace in the little town of Alton, & have not landed his Press, I don't believe the people in this State more than in any other would have shot him. Why did not he take his confounded press to St. Charles in Missouri, where he says his family resided? He knew it would not answer to go there, & I hope the abolitionists will find that the feelings of the people in this state are not to be trifled with, & I hope if any more of the Gang come here for the purpose of issuing seditious papers, that they or he will be made a Raree of before they have been here 24 hours. I can't see where the difference is between a person inciting the slaves to rise on their Masters & kill them, & Joe Knapp's affair, hiring the Crowninshields

to kill Capt. White. I understand the Gang have gone to Cincinnati to issue their paper. I am glad they have left our State. I don't approve of mobs more than any one else, but the people in Massachusetts must not think because we are a new state they can come here & tamper with the feelings of the suckers as they have a mind, & if they persist in the same doctrine, a yankee will be hardly able to live among them, they will be despis'd.

"Tell Augusta, I am much oblig'd to her for her kind offer to help me mend my stockings, but the difficulty would be to frank them & they are not worth the postage. I am glad to hear that Lydia has again recover'd, please give my love to her & Augusta & of course to Master John Henry who I suppose will understand it. You say, I was not forgotten on Thanksgiving day, neither were you or any of the Family, for there is not a day pass, but I think of home & the happy hours I have spent there, & that is one reason I want to sell & make you a visit.

"I see I am getting on the low key & therefore as you say "goodbye" for the present. Give my love to Father & all the Family & you will much oblige

"Your affectionate Uncle,
Henry Nichols"

"North Prairie, Jan. 29, 1837

"My Dear Nephew,

"I have no doubt you begin to think you will not get an answer to your kind letter of the 10th, 11th, 12th, of December; but to tell you the truth I have just received it, besides I have grown to be very busy this winter, but Beardstown is so far off that letters often lay there a week before I get them, although I have requested the Postmaster to send them as soon as he receives them.

"I am sorry to hear that Augusta is so unwell. I don't think she ever has been very rugged but I hope with proper care, she will recover, tell her she must not complain of hominy gruel even on Thanksgiving day for here it is considered a luxury. Please give my best love to her, & the little boy who I have no doubt will understand by the time you get this. You must be careful not to spoil him for I suppose he is a prodigy. Your uncle Benjamin wrote me that your Father was married again. I little suspected I was to have a new Sister soon. Tell *Your Mother* if she can't let me have a piece of *the* wedding cake, I shall expect some when I return, but when that will be is quite uncertain.

She need not heat the oven until you hear of my arrival in Boston. You ask me how this money market is here, I believe it is plenty enough, at least so far as I know the Bank in Springfield has been loaning money on land at 10 per ct. a year, but the usual rate of interest is 12%. The farmers in this neighborhood have received large sums of money this year for their Pork, some of them as high as $4000, which I believe they have immediately loaned out at 12%. Many of them are getting very rich, they can afford to raise corn for 7 cts. a bushel, but they sell it at from 20 to 25 cts.

"You must not suppose that Ladies are so plenty here that a person can remain here so long as I have & not become acquainted especially with such an one as Mrs. Dickerman. Her son is residing with Mr. Dutch, & as you say I think she is a most excellent woman. She resides at Beardstown in the Family of Mr. Pogue. You seem to be in a great hurry for a new Aunt, but as I told you before I don't know where I shall put her, my little 16 by 20 is hardly able to hold my mortal personage, & to hitch on to that lady will add two more to the Family at any rate there is room enough on the prairie.

"I have not yet decided what to do with my place, I have been trying to get Rails to fence in 20 acres, but as yet have not succeeded. If I cannot get fencing I shall finish the House & if possible sell it & buy an improved place — All that we think of here is keeping ourselves warm, it has been very cold, & excellent sleighing for a month, but today it is very pleasant. It is about as cold here as in Boston.

"I am happy to hear that Father is so well. I think he must have alter'd very much to like Boston sufficiently well to remain there so long. If he was not quite so old I should expect to see him out here. I think he would be delighted with this part of the World, but there is one thing that I think would not suit him so well, that is, he would not find it necessary to cover his land a foot thick with manure, although he might get as much as he would want for the hauling.

"If you have a good opportunity to send my trunks & chests to New Orleans I wish you would do it, but I wish you would take the things out of the old Chest & have them packed in a good strong box, as they get knocked about so much I am afraid the old chest would be hardly strong enough. I wish you would direct the person to whom you send the things in New Orleans to forward them to the care of William Basset, at Beardstown, Illinois. I don't know what the freight will be to New Orleans, but I should think not much, perhaps you can send

them from Salem, however, I wish you would pay it & let me know what it is. I will settle with Basset for the freight from there. If Chamberlain has a mind to make me a suit of clothes & 3 pair of Pantaloon & will wait a year for the money, I wish you would get him to do it. I think I should prefer black for the coat & dark mixed for the Pantaloons. Clothing is so high here that I don't want to buy here if I can avoid it. My coat which I believe cost about $15 can't be bought here for $40. If he is not willing to wait that long, don't trouble yourself about it, although I am very much in want of some clothes. I wish you would procure some balm & other sweet herbs seed for me & if you should go to Boston, get about one dollars worth of seed of different kinds at the Agricultural Ware House. I don't want the things to leave Salem until about the 1st of April on account of the ice. Illinois River at present is frozen up.

"As you intimate I did write Roundy & have been surprised I did not get an answer. Please ask him if his Brother is coming out in the Spring. My House will be finished in June if I can get lumber.

"I must now close having got to the end of my paper. Please give my love to Father & all my friends & you will much oblige

"Your affectionate uncle,
Henry Nichols"

"North Prairie, Feb. 2, 1837

"My Dear Nephew,

"This will be handed you by a most particular friend of mine, Capt. Daniel A. Rogers of Boston, who will be able to give you better information perhaps respecting my land & the predicament in which I am placed, especially if I can't get fencing, & other things than I could.

"I wish you would tell Roundy I am disappointed in not getting an answer from him as I wished to know if his brother intends to come out in the spring, you can tell him I have not been able to get any fencing stuff as yet, & to open a farm without it will be nonsense. If you know of anyone that wishes to emigrate this way that will give me $5 an acre for 200 acres you may close, I have more but I ask more for it, as it has a house upon it. Tell Roundy he must come out in the Spring. I want to see him very much.

"I think a journey would do Augusta good, I wish you would just take a trip out this way & take a look at us, if you will come in July, I will feed you on strawberries, poor fare to be sure, but it is better than

hog & hominy, but a person has to take here what he can get, if it is strawberries.

"Capt. Rogers has just mentioned to me that he would like to go into the Museums as he is not much acquainted in Salem will you have the goodness to get your Father to go with him, or any other favours he may want, as he is one of my earliest yankee Friends, & I have reason to believe you would be willing to confer so great a favour to your old uncle.

"If Chamberlain concludes to make my clothes, tell him I shall want good strong cloth, for this is the worst country I ever was in to wear clothes, but there is one thing my clothes were very old, tell him I am not quite so fleshy as I was when I left Salem. I have enclosed a piece of tape the measure of my waste, he can judge by that. I wish he would alter my new suit. I left a new umbrella at Chamberlains please send with my other things, see if all my packages are strong before they are sent, as they will have to take a good many hard knocks before they reach me, especially coming up the Illinois river, if you think it advisable you may get them insured. You can judge what they are worth at any rate get a bill of lading. I think if you send them about the 1st of April, it will be early enough. There are many things I want but as I have not any funds in Salem I must be content without them.

"Please give my love to Augusta, Father & all Friends & you will much oblige,

"Your affectionate uncle,
Henry Nichols"

"Dear John,

"I see the small house is advertised is Mrs. Archer dead. You must write me all the news for except my paper, I don't hear any news, except when I receive letters, how does the RailRoad go on, & what are the Whalers doing. I think some of the rest of the Family ought to write please ask them, & I will answer all if I can find anything to write.

H. N."

The following letters show that father Ichabod took an interest in Henry's life on the prairie:

"Boston Feb 20 1837

"Dear Henry

"It is a long time since I have heard from you. This may serve to inform you that I am in good health as are all our Friends in Salem and in Boston except your Brother Benjamin who is troubled with a bad caugh is advised by his Doctor to go to the Havanna or to the south for his recovering but he has not fully determined at present what to do he thinks it best to wait a few days longer before he decides what to do. I am quite at a loss to know how you like the Western country I wish that you would inform me on that head in your next letter and give me every information in your Power respecting the same. Your Draft on Benjamin has not come to hand which we are in dayly expecting to receive I hope that you will draw at a few days site at it may be that are not in cash to pay a Draft at site. It would afford me the greatest Happiness to hear that you are united and doing well there is nothing but my great age will prevent me from visiting Illinois the coming Season my Health is as good as it was, my appetite is good I am far from pain. Sleep well and I sometimes think that I cannot be thankful enuf for the many blessings which I receive. Dayly from that kinde Providence from whom all goodness, flows I am now living in Boston in Benjamens Family where I have resided since October 7th 1836. I shall long remember with gratitude the kind treatment that I have received from Mary and from all the Family. I walk 3 or 4 miles every Day when the walking and weather is suitable. I visit Lydia every day she lives about half a mile from Benjamin — Your Brother George lives in my house on Washington St he will move from my home the first opportunity when I shall move to Salem and your sister Lydia and Elizabeth will go and keep my house. Pray do not fail to write me often and you may be assured that I will answer them punctually your most affectionate Parent

"Ichabod Nichols"

"Dear Henry

I would inform you that I removed from Boston to Salem the first of this month and do expect that Lydia will be with me by the first of next Month at which time your brother George will remove to his house at Federal Street. John has Bot the Western Half of the house on Federal Street formerly owned by your Aunt Leach, into which he moved last week. Your Brother Benjamin is out of health, and has

gone to Charlestown South Carolina with his Wife in hopes to recover which I hope may be the case — but I fear will not be the case as he has a very bad Couf and rases much but I fear it is his only chaunce of recovery. I am in as good Health as ever was in my Life and as free from Pain and have as good an appetite and Sleep as well. Our friends in Salem and Boston are all as well as usual — and I hope that this may find you enjoying the same Blessing — we all wish to be remembered to you. Your brother Ichabod was well about ten days past when I received a letter from him — his son George Henry has settled in Buffalow as a Physician and I hope that he may do well there but I have my Fears that he will be disopinted as Lydia's son Charley has been up to Buffalow and has returned not satisfied — he thinks that George Henry would get practice enough but he fears that it will be very difficult to get Pay as money is scarce and to be had in Buffalow by the most wealthy. Charles Peirce has opened an office in Boston and has some Practice and I hope that he may do well — I am almost blind and if you excuse it for this scrawl it is more than I can do — but if you cannot you must excuse it I pray that you will write me soon and inform me of your situation and the prospect that is before you and believe me to be your most affectionate parent

"Ichabod Nichols"

More news is exchanged between Henry and his nephew in the following letters:

"Lancaster, North Prairie, May 1, 1837

"My Dear Nephew,

You see by the heading of this letter that we have a name to our little village besides the general town of North Prairie which includes 30 miles in extent. I have been busily engaged since I received your letter, in getting my house ready & assisting in laying out the town, or I should have answered your letter before, but as the old adage runs, "better late than never", though I have been naughty this time, you must excuse it & I will be a good boy & not do so again. I think Father must have made quite a noise in the City by routing so many Families. I should think he must be growing young again, if I might judge by his letters which are about as legible as they ever were, I am very glad that your Aunt Peirce has concluded to go to Salem, that Father can have his old home again, it must be much more pleasant for him, besides he will have the pleasure of the company of you & others of the

Family unless you stay at home in the evening to tend the Baby, which I suppose is the case. You did not mention him in your last letter, I hope you have not got tired of him already. If you have send him out here & I will make a sucker of him.

"I am glad to hear that you have bought a House, you mention that it is large enough for little folks. I should think with so much chamber room, closets, you were going to open a tavern. My house has only one room, & two chambers about large enough to get into & lay down, but not high enough to stand up. There is precious little spare room in it which you may well suppose, but I hope now that you are permanently settled, that Augusta will be able to take care of herself & get well again, but to be routed about as much as you have been since you were married is enough to make any person sick, perhaps (if I can sell my place) I shall return to Salem, please give my best love to Augusta & the little boy.

"If you have not shipped my things, if you can, I wish you would buy me one or two good Feather Beds, or feathers, as they are not to be bought in this neighborhood at any price. Irish feathers I mean shall answer my purpose this summer, until I can hear from you. My house, I hope will be finished in the course of three weeks (although it will not be finished) to move into, as I intend to lath & if possible to plaster it myself. I have learn't (in my old age) to be quite a mechanic. In part, in this country unless a man is a cobbler at all trades he ought not to stay here. When I get ready I should like to see you & Augusta or any of my friends out this way & help us eat our strawberries. The vines are now in blossoms. The country grows more pleasant to me every day. I have not obtain'd a spare Rib yet & at the present there is not much prospect. I don't know that I shall not have to go to Salem to get one if there is any that would like to remove thus far from the land of steady habits. For it is pretty hard to work to live without a companion especially in this counry.

"I am sorry to hear of so many failures in Salem. It is what we are not troubled with here. The farmers are all growing rich & have plenty to eat & drink. I am glad to hear that your Father has not suffer'd by any of them. I should think you would find it pretty hard to get along with the Laboratory.

"I am pleased that the Whalers are doing so well, I should think after the Izetts arrived that every one would be going whaling. You may well call it a godsend.

"If you see Roundy I should like for him to send a Certificate stating that one half of the land entered by him, & me belongs to me in order that I may give a deed as I have had a fair offer made for my land of $5 an acre & I think when I get my house finish'd, if the purchaser will pay for the improvement I think I shall sell, but I suppose there never would be any difficulty in our life time, but we are all liable to accidents. I should think something of that kind would be prudent.

"I am sorry to hear that Lydia does not get better. I cannot conceive what her complaint can be, though she has always been troubled with complaints that nobody ever learns of. Please give my love to her, & tell her I think it must be old age, which from experience, I know there is no cure for.

"I mentioned to Capt. Rogers to ask you not to send my trunk until I let you know although I wrote for them. Now you would send them as soon as possible, as my clothes are nearly all worn out, & I cannot afford to buy any here, if you know of any little thing you think will be useful that don't cost much, I wish you would buy it & put it in the trunks, for every thing here cost 100 times more than in Salem.

"If Father has not sold his Gun ask himself if he will let me have it. I think by taking the Barrel of the Stock you will be able to get it into the Trunk. Game is so abundant that I should make it half my living. Deer & wild turkeys are in sight of the house every day & wolves are very troublesome there was one passed within gunshot of the house a few days since.

"Please give my love to Father & all Friends & you will much oblige,

"Your affectionate Uncle,
Henry Nichols.

"N. B. You must excuse this scrawl but I have not time to copy it."

"Near Lancaster, Nov. 4, 1837

"My Dear Nephew,

"I am very glad to find you have not entirely forgotten me, for as I have not had the pleasure for a long time to receive answers to my letters, I was fearful you had taken an affront at something (though I was entirely ignorant of what it could be) and did not intend to write me again, but a few days since I had the pleasure of receiving a letter from you of the 14th of Sept. for which I am very much oblig'd to you, and hope now you will remember your promise and not be so naughty again "Papa".

"I am very glad to hear that Augusta has nearly recover'd her health, and I wish I could hear the same good news from Lydia. Please give my love to them both, and in fact to all the Family. I should think Master John Henry must improve very fast, as I had no idea he would go along, but if ever he begins to talk now, he will be a man, by the time I get an answer to this, especially if you are as dilatory about writing as you have been. Give my love to him as I suppose the young man is too old to kiss.

"You seem to want to know what I have been about since I have been here, and I can tell you in a very few words. I have not done much, and have but little ground fenced in at present, but if I live another year, I intend to have as much under cultivation as I can attend to myself which will be about 30 acres, but the difficulty of getting Rails for fencing is such especially for a person who does not own timber, that it takes a long time to get underway. I think now I have secur'd the rails & next spring shall break up, besides I have been disappointed which has kept me back a year. My Stock consists of a yoke of cattle a horse, cow & a few pigs, & myself & mice in abundance. I have a good comfortable house though it is not lath'd & plaster'd very well. All my furniture being a table, bedstead, and a box to sit on. These are the pleasures of the far west but provisions we have cheap and abundant. I bought a lot of corn the other day at 10 cts. a bushel & can have more at 8 cts., if I want. Oats, 15 cts. beef from 3 to 4 cts., fowls $1 per dozen, eggs 6¼ cts. a dozen. Wheat from 62½ to 75 cts. a bushel, pork from 3 to 4 cts. & wild fowl abundant.

"Oh! The pleasure of darning old stockings. I mended a pair yesterday for Sunday & I see this morning my toes have got out again to get breaths and I have now about 20 pairs more to darn. It is the worse work I have to do, but as to getting a Rib here to do such work is out of the question for all that the women here know how to do is to cook hog & hominy which I can do as well as any of them, if you know of any good buxom country lass, that would come out, she might possibly find a mate. I mean one that has plenty of charms. I am glad to hear that the people in your region of country is getting so tired of Jackson & his experiment & I wish I could say the same of the majority in Illinois, but the fact is the people have not yet felt its effects so sensibly as they have with you, that is the farming community, but I think this fall the shoe will pinch pretty hard, when they find that instead of getting 6 cts. a lb. for their pork, they only get 3 or 4 their

payments have to be made in gold & silver, as the storekeepers many of them will not take bills except at a great discount, it will make them look round & ask the reason, & if I am not much mistaken they will find it is Jackson's experiment but I believe in all the large towns the majority are whigs.

"I deliver'd your message to Mrs. Dutch for which she is much oblig'd to you, as they have not had the pleasure to hear from their Friends for a long time. If you can conveniently when you write again, please say if the Felt family are in good health & likewise give my respects to Capt. F.

"I shall begin to think soon that I am an old man, especially if I have to stand great Uncle to many more and that I am most too old to get married again. I should think if George Henry finds it so difficult to get along in the East, he would come to the West, but I suppose he thinks he has been West once & he does not wish to come again, but I think if he could come well recommended & get a Farm as Dr. Chandler from Connecticut has done, he might do a very good business. I suppose Dr. C. receives from $3 to 5000 a year salary by his profession, but he works night & day, and I am thinking Henry don't like work very well, if he does not it would be nonsense for him to think of coming to the West.

"I should have answered your letter before, but I had a prospect of selling my house and 80 acres of land at $10 an acre and the man who was a Yankee was to have let me know last week, but as I have not yet heard from him, he intends to play me a Yankee trick. I have advertis'd all my land for sale. I wrote Father a short time since, and requested him to ask you if you saw Roundy to ask him what he would sell his land for, (though you need not tell him what I am asking for my 80 acres) as if he intended not to sell, I should like to have a division made, as I am determin'd to sell the first opportunity, if he would like. I will sell him my half likewise if you see Dr. Rogers ask him what he will ask an acre for his 40 acres of timber as I think I can find a purchaser.

"I hope you don't think I ever get tired of reading your letters for it is too great a luxury to receive letters from home to begin to think of such a thing, but I think you will soon get tired & mad too to be oblig'd to pay 25 cts. for such a pack of nonsense, but must excuse it as I am now done.

"Please give my love to Father, and all the Family and you will much oblige,

"Your affectionate Uncle,
Henry Nichols

"P. S. My trunks & things all arrived safe & tell Chamberlain the clothes he made for me set like a bag on a bean pole especially the coat. I wish he made the clothes by the measures I sent him, for there is no probability I shall ever be as large as I was when I left Salem. Please direct your letters to Lancaster, Morgan County, Illinois."

"Near Lancaster, Jan. 13, 1838

"My Dear Nephew,

Your kind & affectionate letter of the 25th Nov. came duly to hand & I am glad to hear that your business has so far improv'd that you have to take advantage of snow storms to write to the "old Squire" for fear of being disturbed by customers, our season has been this year similar to yours, ten days since the weather was so warm & pleasant that I have serious thoughts of beginning to break up until today. Within a week the weather has been cold enough to freeze a person, but cold & heat with us does not make a great difference in the price of provisions. Flour is about the dearest article we have here. In Springfield it sells readily at $10 a bbl. It is so high I cannot afford to buy it, & have not had any in my house for two months. The late warm weather will injure many of the Pork Merchants very much. I understand one of my neighbors has lost about 200 hogs valued at least $1200, & in Cincinnati they have lost immense quantities.

"I am much oblig'd to you for calling on Roundy. I do not wish to purchase his land, as I am determined to sell mine as soon as possible, which I hope will be in the Spring. I want him to make a division. I am willing to take it any way North & South or East and West. It matters very little to me, which way, for if I sell it will be absolutely necessary to divide, it will be the improvement I make on my 80 acres that will sell my 200 which is half with Roundy, although I suppose the 80 would be as great a Farm as one Man would want to cultivate. I am sorry to give you so much trouble, but I hope before Roundy gets here to sell my place & be on my visit to your State.

"You have or rather will before this comes to hand received the bill lading of your goods. I am surprised that Capt Rogers did not countermand your order respecting the shipment of them, but I never heard

a word to that effect. Shall not be able to reach the articles enumerated unless by special shipment of which please advise me.

"Grandfather has doubtless written you about the family and as father is writing to the store for me I must conclude with wishing you health happiness prosperity and all the blessings.

"Yours truly
Jno H Nichols"

The following letter is from Ichabod and shows the father's concern in Henry's adventure:

"Salem May 20 1838

"Dear Henry

"Your letter of the 4th instant was duly received and I am happy to hear that you was in good health I continue to enjoy as good health as I ever did at any period of my life as do all our friends in Salem — I am almost blind and quite hard of hearing there is much complaint among us of bad times for want of business owing to the bad management of the general Government I havn't heard from Ichabod for some weeks but he was well when I last heard from him — Mr. Saunders and Charlotte is in Andover this Summer as usual — Lydia is with me as Housekeeper and her son — Charles is a Doctor now in Boston but I expect that he will soon be in Salem and Practicing his Profession — your Brother George is married to Betsy Peirce and he still continues in the Brockerage line as usual and John continues with him I expect in partnership. It seems that you would sell your land if you could find a purchaser to your mind if you do sell be sure that you do obtain payment before you give a deed if you are Paid in Part let the Farm be mortgaged to you as security for what is not paid — If you are pleased with your situation will it not be best to consider well before you part with it — from the above hint do not suppose that I do mean to advise you one way or another but is only that you may act securely — Will you write me again if your time will admit of it I wish that you would give me some Description of your prairie town — whether flat or rolly land rocky or free from stones — Nutter now lives in Beverly I called and saw him and Hanner yesterday they were well and Nutter continues the Same stupid Mortal that always was he has within two years lost more than two thousands of dollars seven hundred and fifty dollars by Wm Bartlett and 1500 by Co. Sheatin of Beverly they both have failed and Nutter had no security

whatever . . . In this part of the country we are running Railroads we have one from Salem to Boston beginning in Washington St over Capt Wm. Cons wharf across the Dock to the Mill Pond across the Mill Pond to Castle Hill and through the Greatpastures to Lynn this road will be passable in two months from this Day — The ground is all leveled from Salem to Boston fit for laying the Railing it is supposed that it will cost Six or Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars to be paid for partly by the State Massachusetts and partley by individuals — your cousin Henry Peirce and your Brother George's own son Henry has opened a book Store in Boston — the people of this town are getting largely into the Railing business we have about 20 ships now out on that business and from what has been already done and the present prospect approved is quite favourable — I have sold all my Pets in the great pasture I am drawing all my concerns in as narrow a compass as possible as I find my health fail I am but too sensible that my eyes fail me and that it is best that I should bring all my worldly affairs into as narrow a compass as possible I am now in my Ninetieth year and according to nature I cannot continue much longer on this side of the grave and that I may be prepared to meet the call is the constant prayer of your sincere friend and most affectionate parent.

"Ichabod Nichols

"P S Lydia sends her most affectionate love to you

I N

"PS I want to know if you have named your cow Clara for Clara Crowninshield who has been boarding with us since the last of October last — I would write quite a postscript to this letter but father dont like to have his letter filled up by any one but himself he is growing very childish

GBP"

In the following letter Henry congratulates his nephew on becoming President of the Mutual Fire Insurance Company:

"Near Lancaster, Morgan Co.
June 6th, 1838

"My Dear Nephew alias Mr. President

"Your kind favour of the 26th of March came duly to hand but no doubt er'e this you have thought I never intended to answer it. My only excuse is, that I have no time, for I am continually occupied, in going

through my regular routine for Business, which consists in Cooking, Milking, Ploughing, Splitting & Chopping wood & next week if I feel well enough I want to get out some Stakes & Rails, a job I swear, as the weather is very warm, & my health none of the best, but my fence must be secure from the depradation of Cattle, or I shall lose all my crop.

"I have now got my Farm open, & have about just finish'd ploughing until August & have about 10 or 12 acres of Corn planted, the balance 10 or 12 acres I intend to sow in wheat as likewise the Corn ground in September, & should the Season be good I hope to raise from 3 to 500 bushels of wheat, which is worth from $1 to 1½ d. a bushel, but unless I can get some one with me, the work I am afraid will be almost too arduous, but still that shall not provent me from making every improvement in my power. I wrote to Father hoping he might prevail on Iona, French, or some other good man to come out here, the offer i Made is considered very good & if business is as bad as has been represented in the East, I should think he would come, for he might with industry & economy clear enough in the 5 years to buy him a good farm, when a person gets underway here, there is nothing to prevent him with prudence, from shooting ahead pretty fast, I think I may safely say I am not underway, if I have my health, I am not afraid but that I can do very well, my little stock is increasing & my corn coming up & today after a long drought, we have a fine rain & everything looks cheering.

"You seem to think my expectations respecting the Western country have not been verified I allow, they have not, but it is owing to the same cause which has made business with you so dull viz. scarcity of money & Jackson's Experiment but if there had not been so great a depression of business I have no doubt I might have sold my place at $5 an acre & I wish Jackson & his gang of villains had been to the bottom of the bottomless pit, before he had been President of this country, & I am glad to see that the people are beginning to wake from their lethargy & rouse old van, from his Seat. I hope soon the storm will be over, for it begins to pinch us here pretty hard, though I think it serves the Majority of the suckers about right & if it hurt only the Jackson Men I should be glad of it, but I hope the next election we shall prove to the Union, we have had enough of the Experiment & will follow Maine.

"Your Uncle Ben wrote me sometime since that Father had put his property into his hands in trust, but I suppos'd it was on account of his age & not because he had an idea of being married, when you write please let me know the particulars as no doubt you are acquainted with them. (Don't read this to Father)

"You seem to be increasing your Stock (that is in the Family way) pretty fast. You & Augusta must feel pretty old with so many little prattlers around you. I hope on your account times will soon improve for the better, for I am afraid you will find hard scratching for so many mouths, I see by my paper you have been chosen President & Charles Sec.y of the Mutual Ins. Co. I hope they allow liberal salaries.

"I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Thompson. I think it probable he did not come this way. His Brother did reside near Tremont about 100 miles north of me. I was in hopes of seeing him.

"I am much oblig'd to you for endeavoring to adjust my business with Roundy, but if he appears to avoid you, I would rather you would not say anything more to him about it. He may go to grass. I wish he would buy the whole, for I don't want to be in company with such a fellow.

"As I have no news to write & not feeling very well I must bid adieu. Please give my love to Father, Augusta & of course the little ones & all the Family & you will much oblige,

"Your Affectionate Uncle,
Henry Nichols"

More letters to his nephew from Henry follow:

"Near Lancaster, April 14th, 1839

"My Dear Nephew,

"Your kind favour of the 18th of January & 9th of February came to hand some time since, & no doubt er'e this you think I have dropped the correspondence, but now having a little leisure (being Sunday) I will answer to it, but doubt very much if you will find any thing very edifying or entertaining in it, as there is nothing new transpires in this region, that is worth mentioning. The Spring has open'd with us very pleasant & warm, & the plum & peach trees are in full bloom, & yesterday I finished my Oats — my wheat looks pretty well, but I missed it in not sowing it thicker, though I hope to get 15 or 20 bushels to the acre, it is a good lesson for me.

"There has been two marriages in our neighborhood lately (though neither of them was mine) both of which I attended & the manner they are conducted may be entertaining to some of you — the marriage generally takes place about dinner time when a dinner is provided by the brides parents, consisting of meats, cakes of different kinds, & a large quantity of small round cakes, about the size of a Walnut, called Kisses, & 4 or 5 of the young men wait upon the table, until all the company have done, when they get their dinner & in the evening part of the company remain & those who can sing Psalm tunes, among which are Hail Columbia, Capt. Kidd & many other like tunes, all of which are sung in their churches, but I hear so little preaching that Sunday to me is only a day of rest — the next day, which is what is called the Infair, the bridegroom takes his wife home, where a similar entertainment is provided, & most of the company which was at the wedding generally attends the second day, so that last week I lost two days by a wedding & one day I had to go to a raising, right in the height of my most busy season, & which has prevented me from getting in my Oats before — I now feel quite at ease, having not much to do until the last of the month, when I shall begin to break up another piece of ground, I see by my Papers a number of Auction Sales advertised, but very few with your Fathers name to it. I see Wm. Osborn is selling off, & has employ'd Newhall, I thought you generally did his business. I hope what your Aunt Peirce wrote me is true that your Father is doing a good business if he does not get his share of the Auction business.

"We have had a most delightful Winter, there being not more than 6 or 8 days which could be called cold weather — it has been generally as mild & pleasant as Spring, but I think it has been injurious to the small grain — My stock is increasing fast. I have now a fine colt from my mare, which I would not sell for $100. I have 4 hogs, one of which will have pigs in a few days, two cows both of which are springing bag, two yearling heifers & a yoke of oxen, which as you may well suppose keeps me pretty busy to look after them & do all my other work, & if I live another year, I shall probably have 4 times that number. I begin to feel quite contented & I would not live again in a state of idleness for all Salem.

"I never hear anything from George. I hope he is doing well in Boston when you see him remember me to him & Susan. I am sorry to hear Henry is not doing well in his new business.

"Tell Chamberlain, he will get money by & by but the cloth that he made those blue Pantaloons of, was as coarse as blanketing & miserably rotten.

"I must now finish this ditty, for I have raked up every thing I can think of. Please give my best love to your Grandfather & your Family & all our Friends in Salem & Boston & you will much oblige,

"Your Affectionate Uncle & Sincere Friend,
Henry Nichols"

"Near Lancaster, Nov. 1, 1840

"My Dear Nephew,

"I am glad to find that my letter to Charles has had so good an effect as to draw an answer from you to my previous letter written about a year ago. Yours of Sept. 9th received immediately on my return from the South about three weeks since. I am sorry to hear of the loss of your Son & my little namesake, being the first intimation I had of the event, but you ought not to repine at your loss for no doubt his gain is far greater being releas'd from the cares & troubles of this life & happy with his Father in Heaven. We all have our troubles, though some more acute than others, & I think though in a less degree I have my full share, for mine appears to me to be innummerable You speak of my return to Salem, if I was certain of getting a situation (however arduous it might be) I would rent my Farm provided I could not sell & return for a little while, but to leave here on an uncertainty of getting business would neither be very pleasant for my Friends or me, as I know I can support myself in my place, with other available means which I have. Next March I suppose I shall take my place again, the House is finish'd & although small is quite, pleasant & comfortable. Corn here is so very low being worth only 10 cts. a bushel, that my rent is not so valuable as I expected by one half, in fact all kinds of Produce can be literally bought for a Song for Cash.

"I am sorry to inform you that our State has again prov'd recreant to the right cause, though not by as great a majority as at our election in August by 3 or 4000 votes. If we were not blessed (if a blessing it can be called) with the most ignorant portion of mankind, I believe we should have a majority of Whigs for except a few office holders & seekers. The most enlighten'd but inform'd people here are Whigs to a man & I bless my Stars that I live & own a Farm in the strongest Whig county in the State but about Chicago & the Counties

round in that neighborhood are generally Democratic & where there are any public works going on they are generally Vannies, & the laws of our State is such that if a man has residence in the State 6 months he is entitled to a vote whether naturalized or not & I have such a contemptible opinion of the Paddies generally & the Contractors of the Public works that for a glass of whiskey I believe these Paddies would vote if they had not been in the State 6 days for they would swear anything.

"I am glad to hear that your Father has concluded to move into the Johnson house for I should think it would appear better like old times to your Mother, although no doubt it would call up unpleasant feelings. I should like very well to take a peep at the little circle some of these odd evenings, but I suppose Salem would not appear as it used to though if I could I think I would try it.

"Augusta & your Fathers family I am happy to hear are unusually well, a blessing they have been strangers to for many years, for I think they have had as many strange diseases as any other Family. Lydia of course can speak plain by this time & Sarah does not have to circumnavigate the Globe on foot for her health you must give my best love to them all & tell them all I give them joy, likewise, please add my love to all other dear Friends & you will much oblige,

"Your affectionate Uncle,
Henry Nichols"

"Near Lancaster, November 28th, 1841

"My dear Nephew,

"I have the pleasure to inform you that I have at length made a sale of my Farm (or rather literally given it away) for $1400 to a couple of young men in this neighborhood, very industrious, clever enterprising men, whose characters stand very high. I found the taxes in all probability would be very high and knowing it would be impossible to sell for Cash even at any price (Cash being out of the question) I thought it would be better to take up with this offer rather than let it slip. They make the first payment of $200 in January 1843, when I have agreed to make them a deed, they returning me a mortgage deed, they will then pay me $200 a year until the whole is paid, they take possession in February & will improve the Farm by enclosing more ground as fast as possible & I have no doubt will pay for it in 3 or 4 years. I had better have given it away rather than pay the

taxes and rent it, for the two years it has been rented, has injured it more than four times the amount of the rent, and besides Illinois does not seem half as pleasant now as it did before I made my visit to the East, and if the season had not have been so far advanced when I sold my Farm, I would have return'd this fall on horseback. I am now teaching a School and have about 20 scholars, but I have no doubt shall have 30 this winter. Suppose I shall start for the East in May as soon as the travelling gets to be good. It is my intention now to cross the country on horseback as I have bought one of the best horses in this neighborhood, and one that is capable to perform the journey.

"In looking over the deed from Roundy, I observe, I have made quite a blunder in the description of the 40 acres. It is described in the deed as the easterly quarter of the N. E. quarter of Section Thirteen, which is wrong as that is land which I bought of Thomas Simpson. It should have been the East half of the West half of the N. E. quarter of Section Thirteen containing 40 acres enclosed is the description for a new deed, which please make a new deed from it and get Roundy to sign it, and forward it to me immediately and I will make a corresponding one to him, and have them recorded when I get home I will show him the Patent, and he will see I am correct. Tell him I have been trying to sell his land, and I hope to be able to succeed, but not for cash, if it is agreeable to him, I may be able to sell it on a credit, perhaps at $2½ an acre. There is a person in the neighborhood that would have bought mine, after it was sold, and I intend to offer him Roundy's. The following is the description of the Land in the deed as it should be. The East half of the West half of the N. E. quarter of Section 13 containing 40 acres. The east half of the S. E. quarter of Section Thirteen containing 80 acres. The East half of the N. E. quarter of Section 24 containing 80 acres being all in Township 17 North of Range Nine, West of the third principal meridian. Please describe it from Charles Roundy to Henry Nichols as a certain tract of Land situated in Cass County & State of Illinois, designated by the government patent as follows all but the 40 acres is right, but the description of the 40 never belonging to him, but is part of the 80 acres which I bought 2nd hand and gave $2 an acre. I think Roundy certainly will not make any difficulty to alter the deed. Tell him if I am not able to sell his land, I will see that the taxes on his land are paid and leave arrangements with Mr. Short to pay them after I leave, though I hope to be able to sell his land.

"Having nearly got to the end of my paper and not having any news to communicate I must draw to a close, wishing you to give my love to Augusta, the children all our Friends in Boston, Salem & Portland and you will much oblige

"Your affectionate uncle,
Henry Nichols"

Early in 1840's, after his devoted father Ichabod had died, Henry returned East and became a Boston Tax Collector in 1850. At the age of fifty-seven, he married a cultivated Boston woman, Anne Thayer, with whom he appears to have led an interesting life in the art and social circles of Boston until his death in 1871.

The following tells his nephew of his impending marriage:

"Boston October 22, 1850.

"My dear Nephew, —

As Wednesday next at 11 o'clock A. M. is to be my Wedding day, I shall certainly expect you and Mrs. Nichols to be present to see if the knot is tied properly in true Justice of Peace style, as I am but a new beginner, it is absolutely necessary that some of the old and venerable heads of families should attend, that all things may be done right: so you and your venerable spouse I hope will be present. Please tell your Father, Mother and Sisters I hope they will likewise attend. I have send them a note which please hand them and you will much oblige,

"your young and affectionate Uncle
Henry Nichols"

"Dear Augusta,

As I shall of course expect to be invited to Martha's wedding I wish to reciprocate kindnesses, and if you will have the goodness to ask her to come and see if my knot is tied effectually on Wednesday next at 11 o'clock A. M. you will much oblige

"your affectionate Uncle
Henry Nichols"

VI

THE MAINE BRANCH

It is common in the genealogies and records written in the Bibles of this family to note each infant that dies is replaced in name by the next to be born. A most striking example of this is the case of the eminent clergyman and author, Ichabod Nichols of the First Church of Portland, Maine (1809-1859). The Rev. Ichabod of Portland was born the son of Captain Ichabod (of Salem) in Portsmouth, N. H. in the year 1784. He was named Ichabod, not only for his father, but for a year older infant brother who had died, and so he was known, at least in the family annals as "Ichabod Tertius" instead of as his father's "junior".

Among Captain Ichabod's sons there is an interesting cleavage in taste and talent between the practical and executive on the one hand, and on the other the mystical and religious; we might well trace these two tendencies in father Ichabod's own nature.

So in the family descendants of Ichabod's son George who went to sea at the age of seventeen and had made his fortune as merchant-captain at twenty-six, we may note the establishment of an executive branch. However, in Ichabod Jr. or Tertius, we note the ascendancy of the intellectual, the mystical and religious, and a long line of clergymen and authors.

We would assume that Ichabod had, his life long, a rather especial attachment for Portsmouth, the city of his birth, and particularly for the very beautiful house (the Wentworth-Gardner House) where he spent his childhood up to the time of his father Ichabod's return to Salem. This house was fortuitously situated on the river where a small boy might find much to interest him and was overshadowed by a magnificent linden tree (standing to this day) from whose branches he might look far over the harbor and out to sea.

In a letter home to his mother in Salem written by the Reverend Ichabod Nichols of Portland on August 15, 1821 he describes his first visit to this mansion since he left it as a boy of eight years of age, a period of time of almost 28 years. In it he mentions first, "the entry

with its beautiful cornices and mahogany balustrade (or banisters) of the stairs, I had forgotten was half so fine an affair." He ends this letter by saying "Upon the whole I enjoyed my call upon these old friends, animate and inanimate to a degree I cannot describe."*

The Reverend Ichabod's nephew George Nichols of Cambridge records his own reminiscence as "having enjoyed (on his stage coach journey as a boy) watching the graceful Indian women paddling their canoes under the bridges of the river at Portsmouth;" his father Captain George Nichols, the Reverend Ichabod's brother, had stood many years before, for hours at a time to watch them.

Ichabod and his cousin Benjamin Peirce were the outstanding scholars in their generation: Benjamin Peirce was graduated the first scholar in his class at Harvard in the year 1802 and Ichabod was graduated in the same year at 17 years of age. It therefore seems natural that they would have been congenial cousins. The graceful and philosophic letter of young Benjamin to Ichabod, written while both were still Harvard undergraduates, holds therefore a special interest:

"Salem, Feb. 22, 1800

"Dear Cousin,

If the storm permits I intend to carry this short letter down to cousin Ben. I had no idea that he was going till last evening. Spring I fear, will be turned into winter. Can't some of our philosophic charmers tell us why winter has paid us so late á visit this year? They make everything hard to reason. Perhaps, however, this is not so unreasonable, as many other things they pretend to explain. It is very fashionable to declaim against abstract speculations. But the chief reason, for which they are condemned is by no means conclusive, at least to my apprehension. It is because they can be applied to no practical use. Will not this reason hold good against a considerable proportion of literature, which is allowed by all to be worthy of cultivation? How much poetry, for instance, would it annihilate. But poetry, you will say, *does* answer some purposes of life, of the *main* purpose too; it makes us happy. Do not refined speculations make us happy? Nay, more. Do they not strengthen, enlarge and exalt the mind? Is every study to be condemned which does not answer some sensual, some bodily purpose? It appears to my cousin Ichabod that it would afford

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*W. A. Nichols, *The Wentworth-Gardner House of Portsmouth.*

a good subject for a dissertation, viz. Whether refined speculations answer any valuable ends, and if any, what?
"A transition — my father is pretty comfortable now and no doubt is indebted to your labors —
Another — send me, if you can, and please Thomas Essays on Miracles, by your man. Write me also —

"Adieu,
Yours affectionately,
Benjamin Peirce

"Mr. Ichabod Nichols
No matter for theme."

Soon after his graduation with highest honors from Harvard, young Ichabod held a position of tutor in mathematics at the college; that this appointment no doubt gave him a certain eminence and authority in mathematics and astronomy, we may judge by the following letter when his advice was asked by the eminent navigator Nathaniel Bowditch:

"Mr. Ichabod Nichols, Jr.
Cambridge
"I have not yet attempted calculating the orbit — but wait for a large series of calculations — but will with pleasure furnish you with any of my calculations. I should like to have your best observations from Cambridge with the deduced therefrom.

Your friend,
N. Bowditch"

The foregoing letter was written to young Ichabod in October, 1807, and at this time or very shortly after he determined to take up the study of theology in all seriousness.

In 1809 Ichabod answered a call to the position of colleague pastor of the First Congregational Church, in Portland, Maine. The ordination sermon was delivered by Thomas Barnard, D. D., Pastor of the North Church in Salem, who had long known Ichabod and his family there. From the ordination sermon we may quote:

"From the time I became more intimately acquainted with you, I was persuaded by many proofs to think you designed by Heaven for the Gospel Ministry.

"The country around daily advancing in the convenience and safety of its passages — etc. adorned with a College, (Bowdoin College founded in 1792) with those respectable President, Professors, and Tutors, you will feel congenial; and the just fame and interest of which you will delight to promote . . ."

Ichabod was in due course awarded an Honorary Degree by Bowdoin College and served for many years as an Overseer. In his term of office Bowdoin was to be the Alma Mater of students who should go on to a life of great distinction; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, with whose Portland family the Reverend Ichabod formed a long and lasting friendship, Nathaniel Hawthorne, a boy from his native Salem and Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire, all graduated in the Bowdoin Class of 1825.

The Reverend Ichabod's great-granddaughter Adelaide Nichols Baker, finds that his father, Captain Ichabod, gave "inspiring admonition" to his son, even from his childhood, and the time of his setting out for Harvard College. She writes:

"It was the foundation of Ichabod Nichols' career as an eminent theologian and preacher. He became the minister of the First Parish in Portland, Maine, in 1809 and remained for fifty years. It was, at first, a troubled assignment for he took a forthright position as a Unitarian. In a community of ministers of more orthodox persuasion he met the rejection and even hostility of those who felt his were the beliefs of a heretic. Letters to his father give some interesting sidelights of this struggle and the calm but unbending way in which he weathered storms of controversy. In 1811 he began a letter to his 'Honored Parent' with the announcement that 'the piece of information which I am now about to give you will probably demand all the room which this sheet will afford.' However, it ran to over four sheets of script, fine and even, as he recounted the effort of certain ministers to exclude him from speaking from pulpits in Portland to which other members of the clergy were invited on an agreed basis of general reciprocity that approached an ecumenical ideal until the ugly head of Unitarianism was raised in the person of the outspoken young divine of the First Parish Church. By the third page the objective narrative overflowed with some heat as he gave direct quotations and parish reactions to a mounting town controversy. 'The story flies like wild-fire through the country.' His handwriting broke from its elegant controls and there are

lines crossed out, as he tried to report his own 'decided language, delivered with all the calmness in my power' on occasions of tension. Finally he breaks out 'I am sick of such conduct.' Yet he said 'While I continue I hope I may stand my post with suitable firmness' and ends 'Your affectionate son I. N.'

"The outpouring to his father, who was far removed from the theological issues involved, showed the confidence and comradeship of two minds working on very different problems. The older Ichabod, son of a Quaker mother, had severed his connection with the meeting and married outside of that fold. In deference to his mother's feelings, he made no other affiliation until after her death, and then, though his wife joined the Congregational Church in Salem, he never formally joined until 1835. With strong principles to guide him, his interests remained practical and during a long lifetime he came to know and work with sea and land and appeared rather remote from the celestial concerns of the theologians.

"But Unitarianism, then in its pioneering phase under the impetus of William Ellery Channing, had, to a degree, the concern with this world and men's relation to it which made it a natural road for the son of this original ancestor. Ichabod Nichols not only preached and practiced a stalwart mission of Goodwill to Men, he wrote a number of books which brought to religious teaching a firm foundation. His *Catechism of Natural Theology* Published in 1831, contained scientific information in physiology, botany, and zoology as evidences of the 'manifestation of God in the perfection of the natural world.' Not just 'revealed theology', as transmitted by holy writ, but 'objects of nature' were to be studied for direct evidence suited 'to every capacity.' "

Ichabod himself expressed his point of view most simply in his book *Natural Theology* when he wrote: "While it is adapted to cultivate our devout feelings and render the Universe a perpetual temple for the worship of its infinite Author, the study of Nature is most worthy of a rational curiousity."

One of his long-time parishioners gave a telling characterization of his pastor as "a mysterious man — a childlike man." To this perhaps he and others would, had they been entirely frank, have added: "a man we cannot wholly know or understand". Certainly Ichabod's was a nature of spiritual insight and poetic vision, of temperament and sensitivity which looks out even today from the portrait of Currier as

copied by Wight and owned today by the Reverend Ichabod's great-grandson, William Ichabod Nichols of New York.

Ichabod became sole pastor at the death of Dr. Deane in 1814. It might be thought from his mere continuance here for almost half a century that he was successful and happy; yet in a close following of his intimate correspondence, as well as certain church minutes and records, we learn that this pastor's keen intellect, his large views and liberal philosophy, were apt to be constantly at variance with the more orthodox of his congregation.

In both of the Reverend Ichabod's books, *A Catechism of Natural Theology,* and his later *Hours with the Evangelists,* there are frequent passages in which the author appears on the defensive for his interest in science, — or the rising ascendancy of scientific thought over religious: And yet in the end his point of view remains ever loyal to the spiritual rather than the scientific, or even orthodox 'churchly' interpretation. Ichabod's sincerity throughout these seeming arguments with himself is undoubted; yet, a certain uneasiness rather than a lack of trust among some of his parishioners seems to have developed and persisted throughout the fifty years of his Portland ministry. That this was observed and felt by so sensitive a man as Ichabod must seem inevitable.

A contemporary opinion of the Reverend Ichabod Nichols is "that he may be regarded among our earliest and best writers". This not only for his two outstanding books but for his numerous shorter writings on a variety of subjects. The new First Parish Church in Portland was erected under Ichabod's supervision, and dedicated in 1825, the church building which has served this parish to this day. The dedication booklet contains this original and beautiful hymn by the Reverend Ichabod Nichols:

"Great King of Glory Come,
And with Thy Favour Crown
This Temple as Thy Dome,
These People as Thine Own."

The Booklet on Temperance by Ichabod contains the following striking paragraphs almost modern in medical or psychological attitude:

" . . . In certain studies of the body or mind when persons are likely to feel an indefinite inquietude or restlessness — or craving for they

know not what; *beware* of attempting to relieve it by an indulgence that will probably bring something worse in its place. Books, friends, exercise, amusement, rest — anything but the most dangerous of all resources . . .

"Again beware in the festive hour — let not the moments of festivity and mirth lay up dejection, upbraiding and shame for the days which are to come . . . "

Two years after his ordination Ichabod was most happily married to Dorothea Gilman, the daughter of John Taylor Gilman, Governor of New Hampshire. The marriage took place in 1811, no doubt in the Governor's mansion, although we have no detailed account. In an informal little letter, addressed to his father a week or two previous to the marriage date, Ichabod writes casually from Portland, "I think I shall be married next week . . . " This marriage was a notably happy one. The two sons, George Henry Nichols born in 1814 and John Taylor Gilman Nichols two years later in 1816, had outstanding careers and established families.

There are many revealing and devoted letters between Ichabod and his first lovely wife; not only their devotion to each other is made manifest, but also the deep bond of affection and communion between Dorothea and the home family of Ichabod in Salem. Her untimely death by consumption on the 17th of April, 1831 came as a most terrible blow and tragedy to her utterly devoted husband. This is seen in later writing of their son, John Taylor Gilman Nichols, fourteen years old at this time:

"And now I come to an event of which I may speak as constituting an era in my life. My mother had had a cough, and without any suspicion on my part of its serious nature, while she continued as bright and happy in all her domestic and social duties as ever, consumption was working its deadly way, until one evening it was told me she was dangerously ill. 'If she should die,' I said to myself, 'I cannot live' . . . But that night, in which they first told me of her serious illness she died . . . I lacked but seven days of fourteen years of age. What she had been to me as light, strength, comfort and joy, it would be absolutely vain for me to attempt to describe. But I must say a word more of her, as to what she was to others. She was a rare woman in intellect and heart, — in personal accomplishments, and Christian excellences of character, as all, without exception, who knew her, in the highest

social circles as well as the humblest relations and walks of life would without hesitancy affirm. Of beautiful countenance, graceful carriage, dignified yet easy in manners; bright, witty, often humorous and fascinating in conversation, listening tenderly to every one's complaint; energetic and prompt in her efforts to comfort and relieve she was a general favorite and a universal friend . . . My father was in piteous distress. I lay upon my bed quiet — speechless — motionless. My father laid himself down beside me. Aunt Emery's loving words 'It is all for the best' fell upon my ears, as though God himself had uttered them. Unable to understand them, and hardly knowing what I said, I repeated them again, and again and again to my poor father. I seemed to be forgetting my own sorrow in his. I was a wonder to myself. It seemed to me my heart had lost its feeling. The day at length dawned and I still was calm, trying to comfort my dear heart-broken father. The funeral came. Dr. Nathan Parker (father's particular friend) said in his sermon at the church, his head inclining toward the Parish pew in which Henry and I sat: (I have never even to this day quite understood why he should have uttered such heart-breaking words at such a time): 'Children have never but one mother.' . . . I could not understand the words. I would not try to take them in . . . I had a vision of her the night following her death which I have kept mostly in my heart. It was not a dream. I have had innumerable dreams. But in all my life I have had but one vision. From that time, Mother, as I then saw her, became a living presence to me . . . I must learn to rest, be strengthened, be uplifted, be comforted, be at peace. Often when I have thought how unfortunate, how sad and hard it was for a boy of my age to be without a mother the question has arisen . . . 'is it not good to have a mother in Heaven as well as a mother on earth?' "

After an interval of time John's reminiscences continue in happier vein:

"On the third day of May, 1833, my father was married in Cambridge, Mass. by Rev. Wm. Newell to Miss Martha Salisbury, daughter of Stephen Higginson of Cambridge. (Merchant of Boston noted for his benevolence — Steward of Harvard College.) She took my brother Henry and myself to her arms as own children. Though the words of Dr. Parker at the funeral were literally true, yet if a child *could* have another mother — if a second mother was *ever* like the first in mind and character, in all the traits that mark and characterize the purest,

loveliest, noblest Christian motherhood, it was she who came to fill the place of the dear one by whom God gave me being, and beyond all possible expression blessed my youthful days. I never ceased, to the very last year of her long life, to celebrate with devout thanksgivings, and by a letter of grateful affection. There was no birhday in my calendar more sacred and dear to me than the third of May. Immediately after the wedding my father and mother went by private coach to my grandfather, Ichabod Nichols' in Salem on Washington St. Miss Louisa Higginson (Mother's half sister) and I followed by stage. After a few days pleasant visit there we all went by stage to Portland to the brick house on the Westerly side of State St., a few rods North of Spring St. which my Aunt Lydia Ropes Peirce [father's sister and Mother of the famous Mathematician and Harvard Professor Benjamin R.] had previously put in order for us, having seen to the removal of furniture, etc. from the house below in which my previous years had been spent. Here the Parish came to welcome her and I was able to be of service in introducing them, being then fifteen years of age. Louisa Higginson and I went much into Company, attending sometimes two parties in the ev'g.

"Those were happy days. Portland was famous for its beautiful and lovely girls, as for its accomplished older circles . . .

"On the evening of our arrival in Portland the two families assembled to welcome her (Martha) in the then called Sewall house. All were delighted with her . . . I loved her as our own mother . . ."

Certainly the voluminous family correspondence and diaries prove that Ichabod's two sons were devoted to Martha and she to them through the remaining many years of their lives together; a particular devotion is most evident in the letters of young John to this beautiful second mother.

In 1855, some years after a new pastor, the Reverend Horatio Stebbins, had been settled as Ichabod's assistant or colleague pastor Ichabod wished to withdraw from the ministry. He was persuaded by his parishioners to retain his official relation with the church but "relieved from all duty and responsibility connected with it." And "on this retirement a few members of this society tendered to him an annuity of $550 a year for the remainder of his life . . . He declined." After being relieved of his regular duties at the church, Ichabod "retired" to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to live there until the end of his life in 1859.

The life in Cambridge included for the Reverend Ichabod not only his contacts with the scientists and mathematicians of his day, but very especially with the literary world of Cambridge. These literary contacts appear to have been largely dependant on Martha Higginson, the Reverend Ichabod's beautiful and cultivated wife. Longfellow sent her unfailingly his new books ever inscribed "from the author" as they came out. And one would gather that she was the center of a very intellectual circle in her own right.

In an obituary notice in the Portland paper, 1859, Ichabod's literary and intellectual life and achievement is lauded as follows:

"... Mr. Nichols did not permit his mind to grow rusty ... but devoted all his leisure hours to study. Actually he kept up not only with the theological progress of the age, but also with the wonderful advance of scientific attainment, which in the last half century has almost created a new world. Nothing in the way of discovery escaped his vigilant observation, from the theories broached by visionary enthusiasts, to the profound problems of LaPlace, Currier, Bowditch and Peirce. In his latter days, after leaving his parochial duties, he had the highest gratification in a free intercourse with Agassiz upon his wonderful developments in the animal kingdom ... Dr. Nichols was equally familiar with the handwritings of German and English scholars ... he was early elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences ... a distinction to which but few scholars in Maine have attained."

The Sermon preached at his funeral in Portland, Maine by Reverend Andrew P. Peabody adds to the praise of the Reverend Ichabod's public service; the picture of his "private life blended with everything that was beautiful and lovely. One who walked humbly with his God. Meek, gentle, frank and generous, single-hearted and sincere; thoughtful for the rights, tastes and comfort of all around him."

The Reverend Horatio Stebbins, his successor in the Portland Parish, on the first Sunday after the Public Funeral Ceremonies preached on "A Ray from the Light of His Countenance" giving an appreciative but discriminating picture:

"In the combination of rare qualities of the moral and intellectual nature, reason, and intuition, child-like simplicity and space-piercing insight to greatest themes — in short, all that we aggregate in the

spiritual nature, he made on my mind, the strongest impression of any man I ever met."

Family of Eldest Son, George Henry Nichols

The eldest son of the Reverend Ichabod Nichols and his wife Dorothea Gilman Nichols was George Henry Nichols. He married Sarah Atherton, descendant of an old and prominent New England family and became a Doctor, practicing for more than twenty years in Standish, Maine.

Standish, a beautiful New England village, provided delightful country living conditions for Dr. Nichols' family; through his own ability and effort much was accomplished for the betterment also of the town's facilities. Among other improvements was an excellent Academy where his two sons were educated. After the two boys' primary education their father moved to Cambridge to provide wider associations and educational facilities for his children.

Dr. Nichols and his wife Sarah Atherton Nichols had two daughters and two sons, John Taylor Gilman Nichols and Willard Atherton Nichols. The eldest son, John Taylor Gilman Nichols, was born in Standish, Maine in 1839, attended Harvard College and the Harvard Medical School from which he graduated in 1859, and because of many family associations settled in Cambridge where he opened his office to a large practice.

On June 1, 1862 Dr. J. T. G. Nichols was appointed Acting Assistant Surgeon, USA, at Camp Day. On May 16, 1864 he was appointed Sergeant of the 12th Unattached Company Mass. Vol. Infantry, and mustered out on August 16, 1864. Dr. Nichols returned to Cambridge and became importantly associated with the first hospital to be established in Cambridge in 1867. In the same year he married Helen Williams a cousin, daughter of Dr. John Taylor Gilman of Portland, Maine.

When the Mount Auburn Hospital was opened in 1884 he was elected a visiting physician and continued as consulting physician there until his death in 1911. His services to the poor of Cambridge in hospitals and homes were long and faithful.

Dr. Nichols and his wife had three sons and a daughter (the daughter died unmarried and a son in infancy) leaving the descent of

his own name to John Taylor Gilman Nichols, born in 1877. This son married in 1905 Emily Alan Smith of Baltimore. He became a banker and businessman, but followed in the footsteps of his father in "giving of himself to Cambridge and its best interests." He spent his life in this city except for a brief interval in his first business years. He died in 1958 and left descendants, among whom a son of his own name importantly connected with banking and trusteeship in Boston today.

Willard Atherton Nichols, the younger son of George Henry Nichols and his wife Sarah Atherton, was born in 1844 at Standish, Maine and died August 22, 1921 at Redlands, California.

Willard Atherton Nichols was graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Harvard in 1865 and became a Civil Engineer. To his planning was due the European and North American Railway in Maine* for which he received the congratulations of President Grant. He was Principal Assistant Engineer for the elaboration of the docks of New York City. Upon his removal to Redlands, California in 1889 he purchased land and established beautiful and extensive orange groves. His assistance and advice were given to the construction of the first San Bernadino County Highway Commission.

Our family Chronicle owes very much to Willard Atherton Nichols for his genealogical interest in the ancestry of the Nichols and related families in America. His researches and findings are profound, full and accurate and are recorded in the genealogical records room of the New York Public Library and the New England Historic Genealogical Society of Boston. Without reference to these detailed and authentic records this Chronicle could hardly have been written.

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*The plan of extending a railway line across the State of Maine and the Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to the nearest available point of Ireland (and especially to render as short as possible the distance between London and New York) had been frequently suggested to the minds of both countries.

The object of reducing the time of passage between New York and London received impetus from the establishment of the Cunard Line of steamers.

Charter of European and North American Railways published by Harman & Williams — Portland, Maine, 1850.

Reverend John Taylor Gilman Nichols and Descendants

The younger son of the Reverend Ichabod Nichols and Dorothea Gilman, John Taylor Gilman, followed his father's footsteps and example and became minister of the Unitarian Church at Saco, Maine for almost as long as his father Ichabod was minister in Portland.

"John's childhood passed in Portland, where his mother and the two other daughters of Governor Gilman brought up families of congenial cousins, is recorded in the *Recollections of a Grandfather,* written after his retirement from the Saco, Maine parish in 1888. It throws light on the happiness and fun of those households, describing their feast days their sports, the comradeship of old and young.

"John Taylor Gilman Nichols was first educated at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire. In 1834 he entered Harvard College. He entered the second half of the sophomore term and found his place easily in the lively life of the college as well as the classical academic studies. But his memory of the college years centers more on friendships than on the value of his studies, and he frankly states that aside from these acquaintances and the Higginson household in which he was accepted as a member, 'I can easily imagine my time might have been more profitably spent elsewhere.' His senior year he spent at Holworthy with Samuel Longfellow as his friend and roommate, so that 'we two who had started in the same form at Portland Academy were brought yet closer together in college.'

"His health, which had always required extreme care, prevented some of the activities which he would have welcomed in these later years. In spite of this, he decided to enter the ministry of the Unitarian Church. But there were some years of tutoring in Alexandria, Virginia, bringing him a view of the capital and its great political figures, a return to Portland and some legal training in his Uncle's office and closer association with his father in the First Baptist Church before, in 1839, he began his studies in the Divinity School of Cambridge.

"One contact in those years was probably more significant than all of the courses of study John undertook. He had been assigned to teach Sunday school in Charlestown Prison which gave him a vivid experience of the life of convicts at that period. And later an assignment to the women's prison convinced him that there should be a woman to meet with the classes assigned to him, and he asked his mother if she

could suggest someone to help him. This led to his knowing Dorothea Lynd Dix.

"She undertook, not only the visit to the women prisoners, but found a new vocation in the discovery of the insane who were confined with the criminal. 'From this,' John recorded in his recollections, 'she went on visiting other places wherever she heard of insane persons confined, until she caused hospitals to be erected for their greater comfort and welfare, not only in America but in Canada and foreign lands. The friendship that developed in those years between John Taylor Gilman and Dorothea Dix was a precious element in the life of the family. John's wife, Caroline Tucker Nichols, became one of her closest friends. Her sister, Sally Tucker, went with Dorothea Dix on her nursing assignments during the Civil War. The Saco Parish, which John served during his active lifetime was a strong support of the Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the Army Nursing Service. The letters to and fro between the women at the front and the Saco Parish are a record of volunteer work in wartime to which Caroline Tucker, John's lovely wife, gave her utmost effort.

"After three years at the Divinity School under William Ellery Channing and Ezra Stiles Gannet, John graduated in 1842. He was ordained minister in Saco, Maine in 1843. His father preached the sermon. In his first years he determined to remain unmarried the better to give all his time and strength to his parish duties. This resolve was set aside when he met in Portland, Caroline Tucker of Boston and his old, cold matrimonial theory experienced a change. They were married in the New South Church, Boston, in June 1850."*

In his delightful *Tales of a Grandfather* written by John in his later years "for my grandchildren" he tells of his happy and successful courtship of the lovely young Caroline; he tells of their coming to Saco to live, and particularly of their opening reception as the young minister and his wife, held in their parsonage home for their parishioners:

Caroline had proudly set her first tea table with all of her beautiful wedding china brought from Boston, and the party was in full swing when, with a crash, the overloaded table collapsed and the precious china was shattered in a thousand pieces! But Caroline, apparently unperturbed, continued calmly with her entertainment. Her admiring

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*From an account by his granddaughter, Adelaide Nichols Baker.

husband asserts in his reminiscences that at this point he was certainly convinced that she had been born to be a minister's wife!

As the tragic years of the War (61-65) unfolded, the Reverend John and Caroline were naturally and inevitably drawn into relief work; they made frequent visits to the Civil War Hospitals of Washington and Massachusetts, and instigated the sending of hospital supplies from their Maine parish. Many grateful letters from the installations of the United States Sanitary Commission and other hospitals are found today among this family's correspondence. I quote several heart-rending letters from the desperate women who found themselves in positions of authority in the tragically under-staffed and ill-prepared war hospitals. One writes: "In passing through where the sick men lay (as in one bed on the floor) tossing with fever, rheumatism and all the diseases incident to camp, I could have wished they had the comfort of bed cots." Another appeal from the U. S. Sanitary Commission, New England Women's Auxiliary: "To Mrs. J. T. G. Nichols, Saco, Maine, — could you, even in small installments collect one bushel of potatoes . . . "

But not only the War Effort drew the wide sympathy and indefatigable labors of the Reverend John. Perhaps it was through the influence of his sister-in-law, Miss Tucker, or more likely just from his own great heart and understanding that John became deeply concerned with the work of the large McLean Hospital for the Insane in Boston. In his diary we read " . . . I went to Leachmere Point . . . I am very much interested in this unhappy portion of my fellow beings . . . a future day how should I grieve to think here were so many of God's creatures sinking within my reach, and I kept selfishly in my study without attempting to save them . . . "

The Reverend John Nichols never had another parish except the one which he held for a period of almost fifty years at Saco, Maine. On his retirement, he went to live most contentedly in Massachusetts where he and his wife both ended their days. Possibly Caroline who had been a Boston girl may have felt Saco somewhat remote as she grew older and her sons left home, but more probably their removal to Cambridge was in accordance with John's own wish for a quieter life of study and contemplation, ever most dear to him in spite of his humanitarian pursuits. He asked to be relieved of his pastoral duties before his devoted parishioners even thought of retirement for him. In a moving letter to his parish, and in his final sermon, which is said to

have been almost a complete surprise to his listeners, he expressed the wish to be gone, his feelings that he could no longer serve the parish as they deserved, and that a young man would more than fill his place. After his death a carefully folded piece of paper was taken from his pocketbook bearing these words:

"But now I go my way to Him that sent me (and none of you asked me, 'Whither Goest Thou?') But because I said these things unto you, sorrow has filled your hearts — nevertheless, I tell you the truth — that it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you." — Heb. 11:4

The oldest son of the Reverend John Taylor Gilman Nichols, born in 1852 in the Saco, Maine parsonage, inherited the name Ichabod, and some of the characteristics of the great grandfather who had borne that name. From his Maine boyhood he was a lover of the soil, and this even in a small city backyard and in his later years as a minister and as a social worker in Philadelphia and Brooklyn, New York. Wherever he lived he always had a garden in which he worked from sun-up, before going to his professional duties.

William Ichabod Nichols' two pastorates after graduation from Harvard divinity school took him to rural parishes. In 1882 he was ordained minister of the Second Unitarian at Hingham, Massachusetts. From 1884 to 1889 he was minister of the Unitarian Church of Littleton, Massachusetts. During this time he became, in conformity with his practical and humanitarian nature, very much concerned with social problems, as shown in his work for the Associated Charities of Boston. In 1889 he was called to the Spring Garden Church in Philadelphia; he became also a Director of the Municipal League and the Society for Organizing Charity. While in Philadelphia the young minister married Minerva Parker, one of the first women in this country to practice architecture. She was outstandingly successful, designing some of the new and larger buildings of Philadelphia at this time.

It was a logical and most fortunate advance in the career of Reverend William Ichabod Nichols when he was appointed General Secretary of the Brooklyn Bureau of Charities in 1894. For the man with the background and love of a country parish had become more

and more aware of the problems of America's cities. He had always been a practical interpreter of religion in action, and he entered into this laborious work with the keenest interest. For eighteen years he devoted all his time and strength to this Charity Organizational Service. Then in 1912 he resigned his position and went to live on a small farm with his family in Wilton, Connecticut. But it was impossible for William Ichabod Nichols to remain apart from Public Service, in whatever form. He therefore accepted a call to the First Unitarian Church of Deerfield, Massachusetts; here, once again a country parson, he became a beloved part of the lives of his congregation. Never an easy preacher, it was his deep sincerity and human warmth that made him a successful minister, as he had been a friend of the city's poor.

William Ichabod Nichols was an absolute pacifist, and the coming of the First World War was a great grief to him. He did not live to see its end with the League of Nations which he had long worked for in principle. His children and grandchildren carry on a strong bent for the work of International Understanding.

The second son of the Reverend John Taylor Gilman Nichols and his wife Caroline was Henry Gilman Nichols, also born in the Saco, Maine parsonage in 1854. Henry graduated from Harvard in 1877, and became an eminent Boston lawyer and the financial mainstay of his Maine family. His name and work became important in the incorporation of many institutions in and around Boston — one of the most important the establishment of Simmons College. At his death Henry Gilman Nichols left a widow, the former Elizabeth Robinson Quincy of an old Boston family, and three young children.

The third son of Reverend John Taylor Gilman Nichols and Caroline was Edgar Nichols, born in Saco, Maine in the year 1856. After his graduation from Harvard in 1878, Edgar became actively associated with his Harvard classmate G. H. Browne, and together they founded the Browne-Nichols School of Cambridge, Massachusetts, which has endured as one of the best known schools of the Boston-Cambridge area to this day. Besides his outstanding work in education Edgar Nichols was associated with his brother, Henry Gilman, in the founding of Simmons College, and was closely allied with the organizational work of a number of other educational adventures in Boston. The sincerity and devotion of his work in the interest of education

were well-known and deeply appreciated in the Boston, Cambridge and Harvard communities. A well-known characterization of him by an admirer, the Reverend Samuel Crothers, was that "one would no more think of praising Nichols than of praising Nature."

President Eliot of Harvard paid this final tribute to his friend, Edgar Nichols:

"He did not write books or paint pictures, or leave any tangible monuments of his too few years of activity — he did far better in moulding and shaping the lives of a great number of young men: The best of influence is unconscious — it is the influence of what we call personality."

Charles, the fourth and youngest son of John Taylor Gilman Nichols and Caroline, married in Maine, had no college education by his own choice, and maintained a farm not far from Saco; this eventually became a favorite visiting place of the family children.

Charles left a family of several children and numerous descendants, who in time settled in Michigan, Connecticut, and Maine.

One little daughter, Mary, particularly adored by her father, was born to John and Caroline. Her death is told most tragically in the family Bible:

"Mary Higginson Nichols
Born in Saco, Aug. 30, 1861
Christened by her father at home.
Died, Feb. 5, 1868
6 yrs. 5 mo. & 6 days"

The last two lines were inscribed in the beautiful penmanship of her mother.

A present-day member of the family says, "Little Mary we all called her in a kind of hushed sorrow."

VII

ICHABOD'S DAUGHTERS FORM SANDERS AND PEIRCE CONNECTIONS

THERE WAS EVER a very close relationship between Ichabod's two daughters, Lydia and Charlotte. While Charlotte and her husband, the old family friend, Charles Sanders, left no descendants, we may note that in each successive generation of Lydia's descendants (as of others in the Nichols family) there are found the namesakes of Charlotte and Charles Sanders.

Ichabod had the most personal and intimate advice for his daughters as for his sons; he wrote to his daughter Charlotte on the eve of her marriage to Charles Sanders of Salem as follows:

"March 15 — 1811

"Dear Charlotte:

You have now entered into a connection which I believe is for life wherein your future happiness and injoyment the remainder of your days depends upon your carriage and your conduct towards your Husband — therefore, it highly behooves you always to consider and value him as your nearest, your best most tender and affectionate Friend on Earth — and if it be possible always to study his comfort and happiness in preference to your own by which means you may be sure to secure the same favors from him in return . . .

"Dear Charlotte, I hope you will excuse me when I endeavor to point out some of the many Errors and Causes which I think serves to disturb the tranquility and the Enjoyment of the Marriage State . . . Never I pray you fall into that Error by seriously contradicting your Husband that may wound his feelings —(when no such ill may be intended by you) as no good can possible arise from such contradiction it ought ever to be avoided, but should things be advanced by the Husband contrary to Reason in your opinion — at a proper Season I think it is a duty that you owe him as a Friend to endeavor to convince him of his Error, by the most kind and friendly Argument in your Power — which will be kindly received by him. Whereas a flat contradiction would be taken unfriendly by him and unkind.

"... always bear in mind that nothing can be for your happiness or interest but is not also for his.

"I think that sometimes by the Woman abruptly finding falt with the Husband (and perhaps not without some reason) has been the unhappy cause of Dowering the temper of the man, whereas perhaps by a mild friendly conduct towards him at that time might have relaxed Errors in him (which human nature unhappily is subject to).

"Your most affectionate Parent,
Ichabod Nichols"

To his older daughter, Lydia, Ichabod wrote a long letter which may be best taken not so much to outline the proper attitudes and behaviour for the best young ladies of his time, the end of the 18th Century, as just an individual letter of Parental Advice from this particular father, Ichabod. The letter follows so very closely the pattern of Ichabod's letters of advice and admonition to his sons, George and John (previously given here in some detail) that I shall not include it, only remarking on Ichabod's insistence with his daughter, as with his two sons, on the same main principles of behavior: a strict adherence to integrity and a determination to "get on" with every person met. It is noteworthy that in addressing his daughter he gives no maxims for dress, manners, coquettry, etc., so usually given in the case of "letters of advice to daughters" of this period. Perhaps in this regard we get more than a hint of Ichabod's Spartan Quaker background.

Through his children Ichabod developed important connections with Harvard. Both of his daughters, Lydia and Charlotte, married Harvard graduates, each one an outstanding graduate in his day, and importantly connected with the University even to the present time. Charles Sanders and Charlotte having no family or direct heirs, and Charlotte's husband being a wealthy man, all their inheritance was left to Harvard, and used for the building of Sanders Theatre. Benjamin Peirce, Lydia's husband had a brilliant undergraduate career, being Valedictorian for his Class of 1802. On his return to Cambridge after the failure of his family's and his own shipping interests in 1827, he held the position of Librarian at Harvard until his death in 1831. His son Benjamin Peirce and grandsons James Mills Peirce and Charles Sanders Peirce held most distinguished posts at Harvard in the fields of mathematics, astronomy and philosophy.

Letters from a Cambridge Attic
Manuscript Edited by Benjamin Peirce Ellis

Benjamin Peirce, son of Jerathmiel, began writing to his cousin, Lydia Ropes Nichols, during his student days at Harvard in 1797. Lydia, the daughter of Captain Ichabod Nichols, had been born in a beautiful house* of the pre-revolutionary period now preserved and exhibited as a fine example of restoration. Her early youth was passed in Portsmouth and in Salem. Her life was then one of social and financial security. She must have been a high-spirited girl, and those who knew her in her later life found her a very brilliant and able woman.

Another suitor of Lydia was Joseph Story, who later became Chief Justice Story of the United States Supreme Court. Her father opposed the romance because Story was a Democrat and also because he regarded him as "an infidel and a radical".

The love letters which follow tell the story of Lydia's two romances:

"Cambridge Aug. 31, 1797

"Dear Cousin: —

In beginning a letter to you I presume, I need not make any ceremonies. Our near intimacy does or ought to forbid all stiff & formal introductions. It is true, this is the first of my ever writing you; but it is not the first of our *conversations* — and what are letters among friends but conversations? Friends, I say, & you'll indulge me in that expression for I assure you I feel a *secret* pleasure in the name. I am not yet become so wedded to Cambridge as not to cast my thoughts home sometimes; and the pleasure I take in *your* company hold not the least part in them. My books for the present must take up my attention — But I anticipate a good many agreeable vacations, and rides either to Nahant or somewhere else. The Poem is not finished yet — The Scene will be new next vacation — fierce Winter will begin to threaten us, then there will be no less pleasure in hovering around the fire in a long evening — I wish I had a little of Thompson to assist my imagination, Methinks the fire (in his hands) would want no

*The Wentworth-Gardner House of Portsmouth, N. H., bought by her father Ichabod Nichols and his brother Nathan, in 1779, when he removed from Salem to Portsmouth with his family.

blowing to make a blaze — I trust you enjoy yourself now — Indeed how could be otherwise? You want none of the pleasures which Salem affords, and if there *are any,* your happy disposition will taste them. As to myself I think my situation will be at least as agreeable as it was at Andover. I have Commons fare, & tolerably good — I please myself with the hopes of having an agreeable circle of acquaintance. My exercises are not dry nor solorious. Latin & Greek with an intermixture of some other studies take up my attention at present, & form quite an agreeable variety. But I won't detain you any longer with the useless relation of my affairs, & time wont permit my going any farther — Let me indulge the pleasing expectation of receiving a line from you — What could give me greater happiness? All that can be said here would but weaken the sentiments, as it would come so much the farther from *describing my pleasure.* 'Come then expressive Silence' —

I am most sincerely & affectionately
Yours
Benjamin Peirce

"N.B. I intended to have sent this letter before, but have had no opportunity (My time is stolen therefore you'll excuse inaccurices)"

From Lydia Ropes Nichols to Benjamin Peirce:

Salem Sep 18th 1797

"To: — Mr. Benjamin Peirce
Cambridge —

Dear Cousin,

"Your agreeable letter was received with great pleasure as it informed me of those things I most wished to know, that you were in good health & agreeably situated — You must know I am an enemy to what the world calls fine letters, so you have not anything to expect from me but honest plain 'How do ye's' — My own health is not quite so good as I could wish it, & I hope will (be) one apology for not affording you more entertainment, am I not *very* clever to convert one of the greatest evils into a real advantage? — Your epithet of 'friend' does so perfectly accord with my own feelings that it could not fail but of being agreeable to me, but so often do I hear of the mutability of friendship, that I am lead to distrust my own qualifications with that discretion that is necessary to enjoy this sublime and first of blessings 'Reserve will wound it & distrust destroy' this I feel too sensibly I could not bear; and I will not enter into any engagements on the score unless you will

promise to 'First on thy friend deliberate with thyself
Pause, ponder, sift' —
Respecting the poem my expectations are now high; I expect it will come out an EPIC. I regret the custom does not authorise us an education equally liberal to both sexes, & were I to allow myself to reflect one moment on that truly unhappy circumstance; it would forever prevent my putting pen to paper, & as you will inevitably make a comparison between your own & my composition I hope you will make these deductions which I have reason to expect from your candour — I have been to but one party since you left composed of the *down in town* girls & their usual gallants. Other occurrences Worthy of notice you will hear from Sally & George —

Adieu
Lydia Nichols"

From Benjamin Peirce to Lydia Nichols:

To: — Miss Lydia Nichols Salem

"Cambridge
Sep. 26, 1797

"Dear Lydia:

There was but *one* thing in your beautiful letter, which did not afforded me exquisite pleasure, and *that* cast a damp upon all the rest; I mean your ill health — I hope you won't neglect any measure to restore it, you certainly (can) not be informed how much interest your friends have in your enjoyment of that valuable blessing, and what pain they have when you are deprived of it. I wait with anxiety till you shall inform me that you are perfectly well — Respecting pompous expressions, high flown compliments, flattery, & the like you know my mind. Indeed I think they cannot be found in a friends letter — they may serve to patch up feeble & affected sentiment, amuse some kind of people with — but sincerity discards them — Those who use them will bear Tom Paine's description I think very well (whether he designed it for them or not) they are 'overflowing yet not full' — You set me to thinking with myself what those are which 'the World call fine letters' However let them be what they will, if yours does not come into the class — I readily concur with you in condeming the whole of 'ponder, sift,' The Poem will be excruciating & in True Classic E.P.I.C. Style. And I dare say your most sanguine expectations will not be disappointed — I presume you did not intend to class

yourself with the generality of your sex, and I know if you were to allow yourself to reflect one moment you would discover yourself too why to think so — I cannot account for your not 'putting pen to paper' but for comparison for others, tho I think this ought to be rather a stimulous for you to retrieve the honour of your sex — I am sensible of the neglect in their education in general, and heartily join with you in regretting it — However I earnestly look forward to the time when Columbia will recover its fairest treasure from the ignoble obscurity in which they have been too long hidden, and

'Female worth with purest beam will shine'

I got somewhat disappointed the other day I went over to Boston to see the launching, & the ship did not go off — however, seeing my *father* made ample ammends for it — I am become almost a bachelor — I keep making additions to my furniture, and I shall get so settled by & by that I don't know whether I shall ever want to change my situation

Adieu
Yours sincerely & affectionately
Benjamin Peirce"

Benjamin to Lydia:

"Cambridge Feb. 26 1798

"Dear Lydia:

I fear this letter will not have the good luck to find you in Salem. And, if it be at the expense of your happiness, I hope it will not find you there. Whether at Salem or Newberry I wish you every pleasure you could possibly enjoy. Diversions vary with the seasons. Balls probably are ended. These serve very well to beguile a tedious Winter evening, and I suppose, though I've never experienced them, They afford much happiness. But the season is coming now which don't need them. Dont you think sometimes of your walks over in *'Paradise'?* Cambridge, I think, must be very pleasant in the season of the year — The prospects it commands are very beautiful and varied, and the place is not so thick settled as to keep away the birds — General Washington's Birthday was probably celebrated at Salem. Some movements were made about it here — and I was in hopes my 'organ of vision' would have feasted (to speak Hillarlitically) on the beautiful appearance of an illumination of the Colleges — There was a meeting of the Scholars, a motion was made for it — *but not carried* they in general, I believe,

had private parties — A few of my class (of whom I was one) celebrated the evening at one of the Scholars rooms — We took coffee (a great luxury for us) for supper — smoked a few segars drank some *toasts* and spent the evening in agreeable social chat — How are Salem affairs now? The greatest phenomenon which has lately taken place in the Beaumonde, is Mr. D-e's *rise* — I think there must be some secret spring here. Does not Mr. Addison in the 'Spec.' account for it pretty clearly — The greatest quality he says in man most pleasing to woman is *bravery* — Accordingly we find that Mr. D'e's brave exploit has acquired him, with the ladies, the title of 'Hero.' Upon my word what a subject this would be for Miss H-rs Epic Poem —

"I have such an esteem for the Ladies (not to fish) that I feel delighted, whenever I meet with anything in praise of them. Of this nature is a poem, which I bought the other day, published not long agoe, called the 'Ladies Philosophy of Love' — The Author's name is Stern* a *minister,* a preceptor of an Academy, & a fine character — The present term is something of an interesting one — There is to be an exhibition of the *Seignors* in the College Chapel, and an Examination of all the Scholars before the Corporation — the pleasures of a College life by no means diminish — I wish by this time we may have news from Coz. John — George** probably is not heard of since his departure from the Southward — brave fellows! They are now plowing the ocean and making preparation for future happiness — Good Heavens! may their undertakings be crowned with success! I hope, sweet friend, you enjoy all the pleasures which Heaven owes to your Virtues

Adieu yours
sincerely & affectionately
Benjamin Peirce

"P.S. Do favor me with an answer as soon as possible — If you are at Newberry you may *close* a letter to Sally —

Yours B. P."

Lydia to Benjamin:

"Salem June 10, 1798

"What excuse Cousin shall I make for delaying to answer your agreeable letter after you informed your Sister my writing would give you

*Rev. Laurence Stearns.

**Her brothers: John & George Nichols.

pleasure? A wish not to discover my own imperfection, but I am convinced that along with that fearfulness which arises from the pride of the heart there should be an equal care taken not to give offence, nothing being more fatal to the interests of friendship than the little *disgusts* which take their rise from trifles for by wounding the pride & affection increase insensibility to indifference & dislike, however the fear of not meeting with indulgence is the thing which first induces us to practice that restraint I have just returned from Newbury Port, my visit here was made perfectly agreeable by the company of Mrs. Rogers & the polite attention of a numerous acquaintance. I am particularly pleased with Miss Sawyer, a girl whom no one could blush to commend, she blends female delicacy with every shining & amiable quality, but possesses perhaps the greatest share of that sensibility which though the source of our most exquisite enjoyments, often occasion our most lasting inquietudes — I was also very much charmed with Miss Kirkland,* she received her education in Bethlehem but has resided mostly with the Indians, she is a most fascinating Character. When speaking of these wonderful women, the moments I have passed with them are recalled to my mind in forms so gay and tranquil I could adopt the language of romance & compare them to a vision of Paradise, bright and transitory. But Alas! I found them moments too fleeting for mortality, they vanished before I Knew it to be happiness, but now I have time to estimate their worth. Since my return to Salem I am quite disgusted with the levity and the want of delicacy & sentiment which characterise our Salem parties — I flatter myself they were not designed for me, since when I am obliged to attend one I am unhappy. In your sister, Cousin, I have a friend from whom I receive the greatest pleasure, indeed her good sense and amiable disposition will always conciliate affection — We have heard of the arrival of Capt. Bradshaw at the West Indies, he was very sick with a putrid fever — John** was well, & expected to sail for home in about two or three weeks from the time the vessel left there which brought the account, when that was, I know not. My parents are very anxious about my brother. What may be his fate heaven alone can tell. But I must think if worth be its peculiar care, he will be protected in this & every other danger — Adieu, may happiness always be yours, un-

*Miss Kirkland not identified.
**Her older brother John Nichols.

imbitered by any peculiar affections; & my friend can its relish be heightened by the friendship of your Cousin.

"Lydia Nichols"

Lydia to Benjamin

"Salem 2d day ye 9th
month
1798

"Your good letter my friend came most opportunely. Some imaginary disapointment had hastily determined me either to become a misanthrope, or a stoic; & I had almost persuaded myself there was neither disinterestedness nor friendship in the world. Until your letter (energetic as yourself) had power to convince me I was mistaken; you know the number is small with whom I support even the appearance of amity; but still smaller to whom my soul is devoted; you will believe therefore, I have to exert all my philosophy to bear from them even the appearance of neglect; though I have a degree of pride I make a point of vindicating, which enables me soon to forget these who forget me — This preface is only to inform you how great a share of my present happiness depends on your pure sincere friendship — The World has established rules of right & wrong we cannot deviate from them without incuring its censure & ridicule; but must I because you are of different sex deny myself the gratification of saying I esteem your virtues? Must I practice that cautious & affected reserve to gain the respect? In short my good friend must I play the coquete to continually remind you of your superiority? — No my soul despises this servility and want of independance, though a delicacy inherent in the mind renders it unwilling to disregard the established opinion & customs of Mankind: yet I think my deviation is allowable in this instance. But if I act erroneously it is from a agreeable conversation with him, but I do assure you the more I see him the less I know him — I have no amusements now equal to that of receiving and answering letters. I neither visit or see company thanks to Heaven I am now content to resign that which formerly gave me so much pleasure — but stop, I will not detain my friend with my misfortunes but close my letter by praying heaven to send you peace & happiness lasting as your goodness

"Yours L.R.N.

"(I anticipate an answer with pleasure)"

Lydia to Benjamin:

"Salem Nov 30th

1798

"Well Cousin here have I seated myself down to write you, do you not smile contemptuously when you persieve I have neither philosophy to deny myself any gratification, nor firmness to persever in that which reason tells me is judicious? However I maynot perhaps be quite as inconsistant as I may first appear, I have just returned from visiting my native town — My enjoyment there was very great & it seems as if I could speak of it to a friend I should experience a renewall of my happiness. Yes my friend "I can pass by all formalities" I'll be convinced you receive pleasure from corresponding with me, and to convince you I have a heart, and a soul that delight to heighton the felicity of friends, I throw aside all ceremony, & write you without waiting for this term to expire. I passed a very melancholy thanksgiving, I have just parted from my beloved Hannah, everyday, I discover new perfections in her, & every day my soul becomes more attached to her. I thought of the friends I dined with the same day last year, & found my departed, my beloved brother John was of the number*, & I could not but think perhaps before the next year many of the persons I am now with may be gone likewise. But I'll thank God for that religion which teaches us we shall once more meet to part no more — When I vue the Christian religion not only as a source of pure & uncorrupted mortality, but as the dispenser of happiness, the support of the wretched, & the greatest solace of the afflicted, I lift up my heart in gratitude to the benevolent Parent of the Universe who has promised my soul redemption in the resurection of his Son. "George has sailed for Virginia, he expects to be gone six weeks — your father has consented, & George & Sally have positively engaged to enter the road to Hymen together. So you see Cousin we are in a fair way to call each other by & by, by the endearing titles of Brother & Sister.

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*John Nichols (her older brother) died of "putrid fever" at Guadaloupe June 8 1798 — he was engaged (according to report) to a Miss Peters of Philadelphia.

"Adieu. If friendship, and esteem can give you pleasure you have inexhaustible mines in the bosom of your

"Cousin
Lydia Ropes N.

"When may I expect the happy, & wished for hour to come that shall bring you to Salem.

L.N."

Benjamin Peirce to Lydia Nichols:

"Cambridge March 1799

"If I have not been a philosopher this afternoon, Lydia, there never was one in the World — But to *prove* it to you I will just tell the circumstances — As I was walking out, *Alone,* you'll observe, I took a fancy to go and see an Old fort that lies a little way from the road. There was nothing very striking in the fort itself, but yet when my imagination came to call up the occasion, and author of it — it wore I assure you, a most venerable appearance — My chief motive in telling this was because I was persuaded that it would make you call me a 'philosopher' in future, without doing it ironically — Indeed, does not the fact speak for itself? I will have it positively that I was a 'philosopher'. It seems to me you become very satirical upon the gentlemen, and I believe, upon ladies too! I pray you *do leave* the world in good humour with it; for you know *you* are one of the species, and by going to too great lengths you may get out with yourself — You know the old story of Old Democritus; Though he by the way was not so much offended by the world, as diverted with its follies; for you know he used to turn everything into ridicule. How t'would seem as if some physician, like Hypocrates, should be sent to cure the philosopher Lydia? — One philosopher does love to talk with another really; and this is what makes me have so much pleasure in talking with you — I am glad, Lydia, that I am not alone in making resolutions. Do tell me how many times that 'determination not to go to another assembly' has been repeated — We truly did 'honour Washington's birthday'. I don't know that I ever beheld a more splendid sight than the illumination of the Colleges.

"Adieu my friend
Benjamin Peirce

"I have not even thanked you for your letter. *You know I do* — I am

very happy at present, it gives me great pleasure to hear of those circumstances that render you so — Will you answer this?"

Lydia to Benjamin:

"Salem June 28th 1799

"I am not going to be accountable for either the grammar or goodness of this letter. My head is indisposed, & I have no ideas, yet I must and will thank you for your letter, it being what I did not expect; that you would leave your *philosophy,* rather *exert* it, to have written again this term; Yet you say you like to write me, and I believe it, for it gives me pleasure to think so, and as the sources of happiness are so few in this World, should we not make the most of them? — Why must you Benjamin stay at Cambridge the next vacation, you will not be any wiser for it — I don't think — I would not tarry if I were you, you will enjoy yourself almost as well at Salem as there. We will exert ourselves to make you pass your time agreeably, and I am afraid you will lose your health by attending so closely to your studies, but just as you please Mr. Philosopher. I must bear the disapointment, and learn to be a Stoic *likewise.* I'll not have any friends, for they have caused me more pain than pleasure. Adieu. I feel very sick, and cannot tell you anything about my latin, only that it is tedious Stuff! !

L.R.N.

"I thank you Student for
the little you have given
me — Farewell my Cousin — Lydia N."

Benjamin wrote few letters to anyone during his remaining time in College — at least hardly any are to be found. He was very probably engrossed in his College work & study; he had evidently wanted to spend his 1799 vacation in Cambridge, but yielded to his father's wishes, returning in Salem to "overhaul the accounts" in his Counting House and "to do some writing which I shall want you to accomplish." He studied hard, and in 1801 [1802 Ed.] was graduated the first of his class, having been selected to deliver the English oration at the Commencement.

During this period a coolness seemed to have developed in the relationship between Lydia and Benjamin, and for a while there seemed some uncertainty how the affair would culminate. Perhaps he did not write frequently enough, and perhaps some of his letters might have indicated that he was a bit of a "prig."

A young gentleman named Joseph Story, who had graduated from Harvard in the Class of 1798, with honors, and had been reading law in the office of Judge Sewall in his native town of Marblehead came to Salem to enter the office of Samuel Putnam, an acquaintance of Lydia; she and Story became most intimate at this period. Story was a bit of a poet, and his attentions to Lydia were probably in many respects more effective than Benjamin was equal to. There is also no doubt that this engagement was not sanctioned or approved by her family. Story was a Republican, later called Democrat), and an avowed Unitarian, a religious sect then regarded by many as akin to Atheism. Lydia's father was especially upset and horrified at the suggestion of such a marriage to one esteemed an "Infidel and a Radical," and wrote to her as follows:

"Salem Sep. 6 — 1800

"My dear Lydia:

Your note of this day P.M. I duly received, and in Justice must say that the ideas & sentiments therein expressed affords me grate relief & satisfaction, and does *yr* self great credit. I would again repeat what I have some times before mentioned that the happiness & welfare of my children is the first wish of my heart, & be assured dear Lydia that it is not a small part of my most tender & Parental affections that are placed on you; with respect to the difficulties between you and cousin Benjamin, your mama informs me that their was such, but if I rightly understood her, I considered them not of a weighty kind, if I am not mistaken in your cousin, he is a man of virtue and honor of strong & good natural capacity, and with those qualities united with a good education I can not doubt but that he would make any woman happy who may be a partner of his choice, with whom he may be united. With respect to Mr. Story I must confess that I have nothing of him, but this I will observe, that I believe it is very rare that the great are known to talk as much as he does, and who show themselves to be so much delited with their own conversation, he is good natured and if I am not mistaken in the man of no deep resolution, not of the first capacity who has but little knowledge of the difficulties that attend mankind in their journey through life; as a kind friend and Parent I must my dear request you not to hastily commit yourself to him, or any one else, but to use your Dear Brothers words 'to stand a while at ease and support your own disarmement,' in a concern of so much

magnitude as that of a Partner for Life, for one false step might make you unhappy to the end of time, and perhaps to eternity. May you not on further consideration palliate in some measure Cousin Benjamins conduct When you consider he is a student in College. No kind of property at his command, at present, and if I am not much mistaken he is naturally of a defident make. When I consider these things I can in some measure excuse him, for not naming his intentions to me, as I have not the least doubt but that they are Honorable — let me advise that you may not come to a fixed conclusion until you see Cousin Benjamin once more, for I am fully persuaded that he has an affection for you, and will be disposed if he has the opportunity to make you happy. I must say that I was much embarrassed in my mind at your mama's informing me that you wished to know my mind Respecting an answer to Mr. Story, so soon after your keeping Company one or two years with another. Particularly with one of whose sudden and dishonorable dissmission would probably cause greatest unhappiness in the Whole Family. My dear I beg that you will excuse what ever you may find in this diferent from your own ideas for you may be assured that they are dictated from the best of Motives, & pureity intended for *yr* good, and be assured that my want of Familiarity does not arrise from want of appreciation for my Children, but in part (I trust) from my long confinement on Shipboard at sea, where reserve is necessary, and Partly from the many troubles & disapointments I have met with throu life, you may be assured that my affection for my children is such that for there happyness & welfare I would willingly resign my own, and their is no enjoyment would exceed than that, to have my children happy and familiar with me at all times.

"Your affectionate father
Ichabod Nichols"

Lydia to her Father: —

"My Beloved Father: —
Your letter of today has excited in my breast the warmest emotions of gratitude, it has, and deserves my sincere thankfulness. From your undeviating goodness towards me I had a right to expect this proof of *yr* affection, but my dear father I confess I was not prepared for it, had I the least doubt of the sincerity of my attachment to you it would make me miserable to be so little deserving of your kindness, but now it gives me happiness. I feel I aim at consciensness of endeavoring to

act uprightly, which belongs only to those whose errors are of judgment, not of the heart — Indeed I am bold to say it is next to an impossibility you *shd* have a vicious child. It has ever been the first study of our parents to teach us what Virtue is, and to act as an example of it. And unless we believe mankind are by nature altogether evil it is morally impossible for a person not to be virtuous when possessed of these advantages. As to myself I can say with truth I am too happy to have any great vices. In this world happiness is the reward of Virtue, for where is the person possessed of an upright mind, who will say it is in the power of outward circumstances to deprive them of all comfort. As to Cousin Benjamin I will say with you, he is a man of Virtue and Honour. But he discovered a degree of indifference toward me in not being willing to make the small sacrifice of his feelings I requested him to. That I think rendered separation necessary. And I am certain a person who reflects on the propriety of what I wished him to do, even his own family will agree with me — Before I took any step I asked the advise of his sister Sally. She advised me to do as I have done. And thought I was too easy in letting it alone so long as I have done. Mamma misunderstood in supposing I wished to give Story a decisive answer at present, I am not sufficiently acquainted with his character myself. He appears to me a man of excellent heart and a good head. When I first saw him he struck, me, as he does you — vain and foolish, but a more thorough knowledge of his Character has undeceived me. At present my dear father it appears to be your wish, I shall consider, & treat him as I would a common acquaintance, and I am confident you will make no objection to his visiting me, as such, as his morals are unquestionable. Now my dear parent let this subject be droped, & be assured I shall always endeavor to act in circumspection, and be guided with prudence — "Yr sincerely affectionate daughter — Lydia Nichols"

Ichabod to Joseph Story:

"Salem March 27 — 1801

"Mr. Joseph Story — Sir — Your letter of the 24th inst. was handed to me this last evening, the contents of which I have duly noted. The request you make is of such vast importance, and the consequences of an error in my dession (decision Ed.) would be perhaps the loss of my daughter (whose welfare is the first wish of my heart) and the destress of my whole family. As you request my emediate decision on

account of your tarry into the country for *yr* health I must observe that for weighty considerations in my mind, you must permit me at this time to defer giving my positive assent or refusal to your Requests — But shall always be happy to see you at my home as a Friend and acquaintance. After duly considering and making up my mind upon the subject, you may expect to hear from me again with my positive answer to the same. You will be pleased to accept my best wishes for your happiness and welfare, and that you may speedily recover to perfect, and improved health is the wish of *yr* sincere Friend

and most obediant & *hbl* servant

Ichabod Nichols"

Ichabod, the ever-concerned parent, wrote to his cousin and nephew, Benjamin Peirce, concerning his 'intentions' to Ichabod's daughter Lydia as follows:

"Salem April 20, 1801

"Dear Cousin

Knowing your attention to Lydia sometimes past, and from my friendship for you and your whole Family, for certain Reasons I am at this time induced to ask if you do consider Lydia and yourself under the least engagement to each other. You may be assured that your answer to this delecat question, without the least reserves will not operate to your disadvantage in any way whatsoever, but whatever your opinion is on this head altho divulged to me rest assured will be as secure as though it rested only in your own brest, that you will assaye the above and answer to this as soon as convenient, and that this correspondence may be wholly kept from the knowledge of any but our selves, is the wish of your most affectionate . . . Friend

"I. N.

"Those are things that I do not mean to Dictate in any way whatsoever, but only as a Friend and Parent to Advise"

That writing this letter caused Father Ichabod some embarrasment and strain, one would conjecture from the many errors in penmanship and spelling, frequent erasures and substitution of words in the original copy. However, the letter was undoubtedly copied over before being sent to the suitor of his own choice for his beloved elder daughter, Lydia, her cousin young Benjamin Peirce. This letter could hardly have had an immediate favorable answer; through other letters

we know of Lydia remaining intrigued with the attentions of another suitor, young Mr. Story.

The following letter was written to Benjamin soon after Lydia received Ichabod's letter of parental advice:

"(Sunday)
Salem May 1801

"Though I did say I should not write to you this term I cannot help breaking my resolution to congratulate you on having the highest part at Commencement. I have made a visit at Andover and enjoyed myself very much. We resided in Dr. Kittredge's parish, but we went into the other several times while there. I enquired for Mr. Abbots who kept boarders as I should like to have seen the house you resided in so long. I must say I prefer that part of the town much to the other though it is all pleasant. We made a ride to Haverhill whilst absent from home. That is the most delightful place I was ever in and was I not prejudiced against the inhabitants from fearing they were Latitudans. I should choose to live in Haverhill in preference to any place I ever saw. The principal street is washed by the Merrimac, the view in front commands the River and immediately back of them is a high hill on which they place their summer seats. The bridge crosses the river in the middle of the town, indeed I think all together it is one of the most romantic situations nature has formed. Mrs. Rogers' health is a little better but Dr. Kittredge speaks very unfavorably of her complaints he says they are alarming and only greatest care of her self alone can restore her. My health, for I gave out I was an invalid is some what mended by the country air though every one is telling me I loose flesh very fast, of this I am sensible and know not the remedy to prevent it for where the mind is not at ease the body cannot help showing it. I am far from being happy few things can interest me and still fewer interest me agreeably. I endeavor to be happy because I do not know what I have to make so yet a sigh frequently tells me I am not formed to bear the mortifications of this life with indifference. Do come home as soon as you can I long to see you.

"Adieu my friend
L.N."

Benjamin Peirce to Lydia Nichols:

"Salem August 8 — 1801

"I must then relinquish the object of my fondest attachment! But

necessity commands it; and, whatever paines it may cost me, I will not with my eyes open rush into a situation, which, I foresee, would be an unhappy one both to myself, and her whom I love more tenderly than any other human being. — Yes, Lydia, we will always love one another; we will be friends; we will see one another, are you afraid of such an intercourse? What can I say to render you secure? I will bind myself in what ever way you will propose if you will still allow me to enjoy your company, to enjoy with you a unreserved communication of sentiment — I will set aside self, and reason with you — If we should break off all intercourse with each other; if you should neither visit us nor I you; see what consequences would follow. It would in the first place excite observation in town, particularly if I should meet you in company — What reflections it would lead to among certain persons, your imagination will suggest better than mine. In the next place our parents would be very unhappy. But this is not all; it would infallibly occasion a coldness, and at length a discontinuation between them. It would be natural for your family either in thinking or speaking of the affair, to be partial to you; and for our family to be partial to me — Which they could not help showing in some way or other — Or jealousy from which no minds are free, might fancy such partiality; although none, which is hardly a possible supposition, should really exist — Or if this partiality and this jealousy should not operate immediately, they would in time — Could then the feelings of the families towards each other continue exactly the same as they are at present Would not their friendship be evamped? Would it not finally be extinguished? God forbid — My dear friend that we should be the means of destroying that picture of family love and harmony, which I have been so often charmed in contemplating — No let us rather *risk* returning to the state, we have just quitted, of devoting our lives to misery. But as little reflection will present to you with such a crowd of ill consequences, as to make you shudder at the idea of so perfect a separation. Do you think it possible for me to entertain anything like ill will towards you? — Oh Lydia I shall always love you too well! Let us be friends in future, with out being lovers — I shall visit your house as usual and expect you will meet me with the smile of familiarity — Adieu, my dear friend

"Benjamin Peirce

"I believe, my dear, I have sent you all your letters, but one, which is the unopened letter — This I shall keep still, unless you insist on my

returning it to you — Philosophy, how much do I need thy assistance! But I will not complain — Oh my God — I will rest my bleeding bosom on thee — But though, Lydia, I have bid adieu to Cheerfulness; though melancholy will be interwoven in the texture of my feelings; I am determined that my spirits shall not be breaking, that my energies shall not be repressed — If you can't read this you must impute it to your self."

Benjamin Peirce to Lydia Nichols:

"Salem Aug. 12 — 1801

"You observe the other day, Lydia, that we had not sufficient confidence in each other — How is it possible that I should have confidence in you? I am convinced that I am not the person whom you love. Nor is it in your power to love me. Another object has possession of your heart. I will not be exploited with any longer. My situation is not only painful but mortyfying. I am herefore determined to adhere to the agreement we made the other morning. I will not give you an opportunity of being connected with me from motives of convenience or pity —

"Adieu
Benjamin Peirce

"If you have any regard for me, you will cooperate with me in what is expressed in this letter. I do not wish to be driven to any expediant; but I'm afraid I shall be — I have heard e'm tell about the windings of a womans' heart, but I never knew till now. It is certain that you are interested in Mr. Story — It is impossible for you to love me, & a character so totally different, & at the same time — Indeed I do not wish you to. I therefore declare to you that it is my sincere wish that we treat one another in future with no more attention than to avoid notice both from friends and acquaintances — If this does not succeed I am determined I will not visit at your house — If this does not succeed, I am determined I will cross the ocean, and continue to India and Europe, till I have recovered complete possession of my heart —

B. Peirce"

Joseph Story to Miss Lydia Nichols:

"Salem
Thursday Morn. May 19, 1802

"Miss Nichols

You have a little trifle, the present of my happier days — which

has now lost its purpose and its value. I allude to your watch paper. On it, as on my heart, are engraven sentiments which will survive the transitory emotions, which gave it birth; they will perish only with my existance. If you ever regarded this keepsake with kindness and love, the time has now come, when that kindness is lost, and this love has yielded to other considerations. You cannot now regret a parting with a trinket, which has been too familiar not to be indifferent to you; and which, ceasing to be sympathetic, must cease to be appropriate. Will you pardon me therefore in requesting its return to the bosom, which now alone may securely cherish its fleeting pictures.

"As to the few of my letters, which you retain, I am unsolicitous respecting their fate. They speak sentiments, which I am not ashamed to avow, and feelings, which few might not incline to believe respecting Miss Nichols. You can burn, keep or return them at your pleasure.

"De mortibus nil nisi bonum.
Adieu
J. Story"

In the end, Father Ichabod and the long family affection won out. In November of 1803 we have another long, happy and confident letter from Ichabod to young Benjamin Peirce, written evidently on the very eve of his happy marriage to Lydia.

"Salem, November 29th, 1803

Mr. Benjamin Peirce
"Dear Cousin

"Your kind letter of the 29th ultimo was with pleasure Received, & the contents of which I have duly considered. Would inform you that your visits at our House has been pleasing, & always agreeable to me. Would also inform you that the welfare, the happiness & Respectability of my Children has always been the first wish of my Hart, & that in conformity to those feelings, (& the regard I have for you) I must now say that it is quite agreeable to me that whenever it is most convenient for yourself & Lydia to change your situation in life that you do it, & you may rest assured that I shall always with pleasure do everything in my power to contribute to your welfare & happyness, so far as is consistant in me as a Friend or Parent to do, & I hope and trust that you will always (from my candor) be fully convinced that if anything is wanting on my part to contribute to your happyness, it will not be owing to my inclination, but my want

of ability to do more than you would even desire. There is one thing I think you may be assured of from me, whenever you may need it, for which you may apply with safety or without the least reserve at all times, visit my sincear & best advice, which I feel to be my most sacred Duty to give my Children whenever they may need it, & should it prove to be useful to them, it will be gratifull to me & I shall feel myself Doubly Rewarded.

"I am your Sincear Friend
& Most Hbl Servant
Ichabod Nichols"

Benjamin Peirce and Lydia Ropes Nichols were married in 1803. They spent the first twenty-five years of their married life in Salem where they lived in one half of a big house next door to another young couple, Lydia's brother George, and his wife Sally, the sister of Benjamin.

The two young men were engaged in a thriving shipping business when Salem was the second most important port for American commerce. It was at the wish of Benjamin's father Jerathmiel Peirce, that he entered the world of trade. He had graduated the first scholar of his class at Harvard. His inclination would probably have led him to follow one of the learned professions, law, the ministry, or public affairs, possibly serving as a Justice of the Peace, a more important office in Massachusetts than at present. He represented Essex County in the Massachusetts Senate at an unusually early age and later served as Representative from Salem in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. He was an ardent Federalist and a frequent contributor to the press. In 1812 he was selected to deliver the Fourth of July oration in his native town.

After the failure of his Father's business in 1826, he faced his reverses in fortune and gladly accepted the appointment as Librarian of Harvard University. The stipend given him for his work there seems ridiculously small today, ($600), but he passed in Cambridge the happiest period of his life. He found the work more congenial to his taste than anything he had done before. He issued the first complete printed catalog of the Harvard Library. He had almost completed his "A History of Harvard to the Revolution" at the time of his death. His book was published under the direction of his friend, John Picker-

ing. Lydia had learned in her youth the craft of bookbinding and some of the volumes bound by her hands found a place in the Harvard Library.

During the period when Benjamin and Lydia lived in Cambridge they and their family occupied an ancient structure known as the "Gannett House" (Cable Gannett being a former "Steward of Harvard). Partly from necessity and also because it was very much the custom for people in old Cambridge to do, they took boarders, probably all students of Harvard. They seemed to have had an agreeable household, having as many as twenty at their table. One of their student boarders was young Park Benjamin of literary promise who graduated in 1829. He became a well known poet and editor. Another boarder at Lydia's large table was Timothy Walker whose letter to the Peirces after he had left Cambridge gives a glimpse of the happy family life centering about Lydia.

During the Cambridge years the families of Benjamin Peirce and Judge Joseph Story, who had also loved Lydia and sought her in marriage, became friendly and intimate. In 1851 Mr. William W. Story, son of Joseph Story, published the life and letters of his father. In the copy which he presented to Lydia Peirce the following letter was placed by him and kept by her:

"My dear Mrs. Peirce

I thank you a thousand times for your very interesting & very kind letter in relation to my father — The testimony you bear to his purity of Character and strength of purpose, is so warm and cordial, that it goes to my heart — I shall willingly use everything that is fitting for the world to know, and shall esteem what you have given me as among the most valuable & delightful illustrations of his character that I have —

"The general outline of your connection with my Father has been long known to me but the details of it as you state them were not. They are certainly most interesting & honorable both to you and to him — I need not assure you how warm a respect my Father always entertained for you to the day of his death — and I am sure that his early opinion of yr character and mind never changed.

"With renewed thanks for your warm kindness, Mrs. Peirce —

Believe me, ever most truly yrs

W. W. Story"

From Lydia Ropes (Nichols) Peirce in Salem to Hannah Farnham (Sawyer) Lee (Mrs. George Gardner Lee) in Boston:

"June 23, 1823

"My dear friend

Last evening I received your card racks and so far from wishing with you that they were handsomer I almost regret they are so handsome; for I fear you have spent time in doing them that you know so well how to occupy on higher objects: but I am delighted with them, not only as specimens of your taste but as marks of an affection that has lived through such a variety of events and changes. When we were first acquainted we were a couple of romantic girls attracted together by a kind of romantic sentiment and a similarity of pursuits. Now you are in a situation which necessarily obliges you to associate with the most fashionable people and to visit in the highest circles; and from natural inclination you make literary pursuits your first object and literary society your highest pleasure. I am a kind of obscure body, devoted chiefly to household cares, deriving my happiness from contributing to the happiness of my husband and friends, in educating my children, and spending my leisure moments in those religious beauties and exercises that the world look on with contempt and pity; yet our affection for each other seems unimpared, and the pleasure we derive from each others society appears to have suffered no diminution.

"I am making arrangements to have a good leisure week to devote to book binding. When I have got through you must come and visit our little study. I expect you will hardly believe it possible that Laharpe and Florian have not made a trip to Paris to get their brilliant costumes; for if I can get machinery to put it on there will not be want of gold leaf in ornamenting their dress. I shall not forget your manuscript of good devices. It would make me quite uneasy if I thought you were waiting for it to put them in operation.

"I just hinted the other day my thanks to you for the kind interest you manifested in my boys by your observations on their being sent from home. Had Milton Academy been a suitable place to have sent Ben* I should have been delighted to have taken both our boys and passed the summer there; but on account of what President Kirkland

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*Her eldest son, the "Mathematician".

says of it, I have given up that plan, and there is no other place he recommends that I should feel willing to rusticate in a few months. Besides, Mr. Walsh, Ben's present instructor, thinks it would be a disadvantage to him to change his school at the present time. Mr. Peirce now intends, when he sends him from home, to place him with Mr. Putnam. I have no doubt that were our children absent from us they would make more manly and interesting boys; but as the first objects in education are to secure to children good constitutions, correct principals, and that fortitude which will resist temptations, it must require a constant watchfulness to obtain the blessings for them; and there can be no one so willing to exert it as parents.

It is certainly never worth while for the minor object of making boys manly to run any risk of placing them in a situation where there will be a danger of having their nice moral sense injured or their love of learning lost. A solid foundation must be first laid; and there will be little difficulty in acquiring those manners which are essential to the well bred gentleman, and to an introduction into genteel society. A good exterior deportment is very important when united with the more solid qualifications; but often in acquiring the former the latter are neglected, which is an injury time will not repare. In the other case a year or so passed in good company will give all the polish that is necessary to one whose mind has been enlarged and strengthened by learning and virtuous principals. We have had sent us Mr. Cogswell's and Mr. Bancroft's Prospectus of a school they are about establishing at Northampton, but as they refused to receive any pupils over the age of twelve it is out of the question for Ben. On some accounts it would be an eligible situation for Charles. Mr. Cogswell is a man of learning and talents; but he is one of those excentric, unstable geniuses that are peculiarly disqualified for the drudgery of teaching children the first elements of education. Your observations on sending our boys from home deserve much serious consideration; they will lead us to reflect more on the subject than I have ever done. If we do not follow your advice, do not think it lost. It will at least put us more on our guard against those evils resulting from our too amiable management to which you allude.

"I wish in turn I could offer you some advice on the management of your children; but nature seems to have done that for them in their minds, dispositions, and I may say manners, that renders much interference on your part unnecessary. *Mary Ann* is now so near being

a young lady and has so much good sense, so sweet a disposition and correct principals, that she is quite out of the way. Only remind her about hanging herself daily that her body may become as straight as her mind. Louisa you say is your scholar; but she is so sedate, so considerate, and so industrious that I rather think she would make a very accomplished woman even if you are to entrust her education to a less eminent instructress. Georgina appears to have too much of the mother about her to be kept long in leading strings. She will be inclined soon to take the management of herself into her own hands; and I think she and dame nature will produce a character that will command the respect even of Mrs. Lee. You see I have taken your children all out of your hands, though I am not for advising you to send them from home to be educated, and acknowledge my wants of talents to 'rear the tender thought', yet if you will trust either of them with me for a short time it may be of some advantage to them. Louisa looks rather too delicate in her health. Pope's Pompey will wait on her to ride with great pleasure and give her an opportunity by air and exercise to gain that rosy hue which would be very becoming to her; and as we are so eminent in Salem for our amiable and humble virtues Georgina would be likely to reap some benefit by breathing our air a short time. At least it might assist her in acquiring a reputation for those gentle qualifications which her mother has professed to sigh for.

"L.R.P."

Mary Ann Lee did at least make a visit to Salem, as this letter dated 1823 would indicate. It is addressed to Elizabeth Peirce (Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce, oldest child of Benjamin & Lydia R. Peirce):

"Boston Monday June 1823

"Dear Elizabeth: —

I received yr letter, the day before yesterday, with a great deal of pleasure I was most happy to hear of Pompey's convalescence I never have described half of his virtues or beauties, to Mr. Raulstone, because I thought he would be so determined to have him, that he would succeed. I beg you will not permit him to be abused and do tell every one that discovery I made that shipping the saddle produces the same good effect on such a spirited a steed as Pompey. I wish I could see your new favorite, however I am not at all afraid of his surpassing mine.

VIII

THE PEIRCE FAMILY

THE PEIRCE FAMILY (of Charlestown and then of Salem) came to this country from Norwich, Norfolk Co., England in 1637 and settled first in Watertown, Massachusetts. John (Peirce) Pers came with his wife Elizabeth and four children either in the *John and Dorothy* or *Rose of Yarmouth.*

The name Peirce had evolved from many variations, as Pers, pronounced as Pear, and perhaps signifying also the fruit. "The surname Peirce is a diminutive of Peter as are other forms of the name. According to tradition in the family, the old pronunciation of the name rhymed with Pear."* We know that the family is of ancient origin and we may even cite the pre-Chaucerian "Piers Plowman" as a possible connection.

In the fourth generation after the arrival of the first of his family, Jerathmiel Peirce was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts on January 22, 1747. After the death of his parents the young Jerathmiel chose his older brother Benjamin as his guardian and the two brothers came to Salem in 1763. Here Jerathmiel began his business life as a leather dresser, and later became a successful East India merchant of the firm of Peirce and Waitte. On February 6, 1772 he married Sarah Ropes, the oldest daughter of Benjamin Ropes. In 1801 Jerathmiel's daughter, Sally, married George Nichols, son of Ichabod; from this union and another marriage between Benjamin Peirce and Lydia Nichols the Peirce-Nichols family descends.

From the family of Ichabod's beloved daughter Lydia and her husband and cousin Benjamin Peirce there descended a family of brilliant intellectuals who carried the family activity forward in quite another dimension: pioneering and brave voyages undertaken not to India and the East nor on the Oceans circling our material Globe, but in study and conjecture, in exploration of the Heavens or outer

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**Genealogical and biographical records of American families representative citizens: Illustrated.*

space*, in the laws of logic and mathematics**, and in the realm of the nature, the mind and the spirit of man†.

In the year 1812, the Hon. Benjamin Peirce (Jerathmiel's son Benjamin) delivered the Annual Fourth of July Oration in Salem, comparing the Colonies and England as the "Stripling of Israel vs. the Powerful Champion of the Phillistines." Benjamin calls *faction* the enemy of liberty, and claims that *faction* controls the Country with *power* the object of *faction:* "Had the public good been consulted, we would never have combined with other powers for the destruction of our own commerce," the speaker maintained bitterly. His brilliant understanding and the actual involvement of his own family and the Nichols family in the business of commerce and shipping enabled him to foresee the ruin which the Embargo Act would bring upon the families.* In Mr. Jefferson, the speaker maintained, "Philosophy took possession of the Chair of State; her head teeming with sublime visions — vs. common sense."

Benjamin Peirce was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature and deeply interested in the political scene. When his family business failed in 1826 he became librarian and historian of Harvard College. His manuscript, *History of Harvard to the Revolution* was edited by John Pickering and published posthumously in 1833. He died in 1831.

The children of Benjamin Peirce and Lydia Nichols were Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce, born in 1804, John Nichols, born two years later (died in 1810), Benjamin, Jr., born in 1809 (died 1880), and Charles Henry (a doctor, born in 1814) never married (died in 1855).

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*Benjamin Peirce, Jr., Harvard 1829, Mathematician ("World-Famous") Professor at Harvard.

**James Mills Peirce, son of Benjamin, Jr., Astronomer; Professor at Harvard.

†Charles Sanders Peirce, Founder of American Philosophy and Doctrine of Pragmatism.

*The Embargo Act, first passed in 1807 was an attempt to control neutral commerce. Jefferson hoped this would force Great Britain to relax the rigorous rulings on cargoes and sailors (Empressment of sailors and seizure of American ships).

Lydia Nichols Peirce's sharp wit and her husband Benjamin's warmth and easy epistolary style both appear to have been inherited by their daughter, Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce, whom I would name as the best letter writer of this long family chronicle. Charlotte Peirce lived to a ripe old age (1804-1888); she never married and many of her years were spent quietly as companion to her mother in literary Cambridge. "Lizzie" as she signed herself in many family letters appears to have been one of those Cambridge ladies of the mid-nineteenth century who were known as "bluestockings"; to gratify their literary leanings Radcliffe was eventually founded in 1882 as the "Harvard Annex."

It seems appropriate here to quote from a letter of Lydia Nichols Peirce to her sister-in-law Elizabeth or Betsy Peirce, and to follow with the letters of her daughter Charlotte Elizabeth or "Lizzie," as both the mother and daughter appear to have had the same letter writing talent. Lydia Peirce writes to Betsy from New York, where Lydia had taken the position of housekeeper and governess, after her husband's death, in the family of the widower Judge Jones:

"New York March 15, 1833

"Dear Betsy —

I should have written you my dear sister before now, but I have had a great deal to do and I know that you would see all the letters I have written to Salem. I would have been much gratified to have received a letter from you for I have not enjoyed anything more highly since I have been in N. Y. than in reading the letters I have got from my friends in N. E.

"I hope you have passed a pleasant winter — I hear you have been reading a great deal to my father. I sincerely thank you for every attention you pay my beloved parents. I think of them very often, and always with great regret that it was not in my power to live with them the remainder of my days. It would have been a great gratification to me. It seems to me that the farther I advance in life, they become more essential to my happiness. They now have arrived at an age when every day they are spared to me — calls for peculiar feelings of gratitude. There is no sacrifice I am not willing to make for my children — and until Charles is fixed in business, I intend to do all in my power to make his situation in life an eligible one. I have not

visited a great deal since I have been here, but the visits I have made have been very pleasant.

"You have seen N. Y. so can form a very good idea of it. The ladies dress here very much as they do in Boston, but with more taste and not as showy. Goods are cheaper here than they are in Boston. You can buy here quite handsome French prints for 25cts a yard. French muslins also. Goods in the newest fashion are dear, but as soon as they get at all out of fashion they sell very low. I saw a case of French muslins the other day that were just opened. They were white grounds with a small patch coloured thing. Not larger than the top of your finger. These were seventy-five cents a yeard, but you can buy such as were worn last year for twenty-five.

"We have very good help excepting our cook, I don't like her. I wish I could get a good one from N. E. Where is Elira Nimblet. I believe Mr. Lang is dead. If so she may be out of a place. If she is, do see if she would like to come to N. Y. I will give her $1.50 cts a week and pay her passage — even higher wages if she will come. Her work will be to cook the dinner and breakfast, take care of the kitchen store closets and lower entry, Her own chamber and wash the sheets and table linen. The man always gets tea — the cook washes the dinner dishes and the other dishes used in the kitchen — unless there is company this would be all her work and we seldom have company that increases the work. I should admire to have her come. I want a first rate cook and I know Elria is one. I should be willing to pay her eight dollars a month. We keep a nurse-chamber woman, man servant and cook. The man and chamber woman are husband and wife, very respectable people. The nurse is quite accomplished. When I am busy, she keeps school for the children. I have a fire constantly in my chamber — and the chamber woman makes it before I am up in the morning and it is her business to see that it is always in good order. I should not any more think of putting my hand to do any house work than though I were a boarder in the family. Still I find enough to do. I rise at seven, breakfast at eight, which we don't get through before nine. I then keep school till twelve. Then on pleasant days I walk out with the children or make calls. After returning I dress for dinner. We dine at half past three o'clock or four. After dinner I hear Sam say his lessons for the next day at his school. He goes to Richard Jenk's school. We take tea at half past six. I sit then in the parlour with Mr. Jones and the children till nine, when I go

to my own room, unless we have company, and go to bed at ten. You see my life is a very regular one. I attend the Episcopal Church. Mr. Hawks the minister is the most popular preacher in the City. His sermons are evangelical and he is thought to be orthodox in his feelings. I go often in the afternoon of the Sabbath to hear Mr. Cox, the Presbyterian clergyman. He is an excellent preacher.

"Give my love to Mrs. Lawrence and her family. They also I wish to write to, but you see I have not much time I call my own except late in the evening.

"My love to Mary Anderson. I wish she would write me. How is Henry your brother? And what is he doing? Is he still in the bank in Boston?

"Love to all who remember me.

Your sister much affectionately,
LRP"

A letter from Lydia's daughter Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce follows:

"Rhinbeck March 9th 1837

"My dear Sarah,

. . . As to Charles the Bacheler, I am glad he is married I don't feel a bit of heart about it so you need not condole with me any longer on that subject. I always thought that he was higher than a yellow lilly. The widow is much handsomer and can be compared to a peony as far as his nose is concerned. When is Susan to be married? and will she come on to Rhinbeck immediately after her marriage? Notwithstanding your condolences on a certain subject yet your letters are a great treat to us and I pray dear Cousin that you will write to us very often. It always seems to me that I have nothing interesting to tell you about, the day passes just like another in a variety of little occupations, and though I keep a journal yet I cannot find anything but sentiment to put into it. Even this has begun to fail for lack of exciting correspondence. No widower is here, no gentle bachelor! Alas! I cannot sentamentalize about pigs, old horses, geese, hens, soap, making ham smoking and all the others, etc. of the farm. Mother even has lost her romance, and is growing as fat as if she never read a novel in her whole life. One of my amusements is to ride about on an old stupid horse — when he gets tired I become frightened lest he will fall beneath me and then I stop all the familys I meet to ask them, "Is my poor horse not tired to death," after receiving the consoling answer I

give my horse a shout and off we trot through mud, over stones, up the hill and down — till we meet another farmer whose compassionate countenance induces me to repeat my question. Mother has been on horseback several times. She does not put on a bonnet but canters along in her house dress, leaving a part of her cap as a memorial, to every scraggly tree beneath which she past. . . . We have now 4 horses in the barn — one is called Juda — about 28 years old — another, Jerry (which we hired on account of his superior docility, rather older than Juda two carriage horses names Peacock and Prancer, youths of 30 quite too lovely. Next week we expect to have a new span of horses — which we shall commonly use and which though only 7 or 8 years old are, we are told, very gentle you may imagine that a gentle horse will be a great comfort to us. In order to be doubly secure we have engaged in place of our old and timid driver a stout and experienced, reins man, who to quote his own words "is no more afeared of a horse than nothing at all, and will go about amoungst them in the dark just as willing as in the light" according to everybody he is the best driver in the Rhinebeck. You can not imagine how glad we all were to see Charles—I hope to see you all next autumn but hardly till then shall I be able to leave my present home.

"How are grandpa and grandma — I wish I could see them — Aunt and Uncle Sanders we shall be looking for as soon as April comes. I hope they will come very soon. I am glad Uncle N. has given up the farm — as it always seemed to be a source of great trouble and anxiety to him. We know now more about farming than we used to as we have attended a considerable to the subject since we came to Rhinebeck — all our wheat grows upon this place — that we might have more than enough to supply the family. We had some ground — two or three barrels, but I fancied that it tasted of garlick so we returned to the old method of buying from the store and we sold the wheat in its original state. We have several cows, but none of them are good; neighbor was our dairy woman, makes the best butter in the world. I just looked out of the window and there I saw all the family coming home from Church; in the great wagon alias steam boat drawn by Peacock and Prancer were Mother, Mary Anne, and Cornelia, Charles, Jane (the Chamber Maid) and Mr. Sawyer the driver. Following them was a small wagon containing Mrs. Denny (the Cook) and Sam who drove old Gray. They have been to the

Methodist church, three miles distant. Mother has just returned with a strange story about a man servant who was we thought very faithful. He lived here when Mother first came to New York with his wife. She became sick, so then he went with her to Ireland where she died. He returned to this country and came here to live. He fell in love with our chamber maid, a pretty girl named Amanda. Her father opposed her marrying him and then much to our surprise they came one night home and had been to the minister who had married them. They continued to live here till about a fortnight since and then Mother dismissed them. Amanda was sick and Patrick was not sufficiently acquainted with driving; Patrick professed great sorrow at leaving and cried about it. This morning his wife returned to Rhinebeck with the intelligence that Patrick had run away and taken up on Judge Jones account, $400. It is awful to have to do with so many Irish people as we have had to since we have been in New York. We had an Irish nurse — the most conceited and vulgar person in the world, and a great slap. She plagued our lives out till at last we got rid of her. Our servants are our greatest troubles, faithless and ignorant. Last summer I had to work really hard and yet we had four women and a man almost the whole time. I often think that I wish Mother and I could live alone and not have to keep one of these plagues. But we seem to be placed by Providence here in this family; how long it will be our duty to remain we know not — till we can see the day clear before us we shall not think of leaving, but indeed I cannot help some times wishing that we had never come, while we are here we will try to do our duty. We may have to stay several years. There are many advantages and many pleasures connected with this situation — and this world is not our Paradise. The children are very good and obedient. Cornelia is my favorite and would be yours, also. Don't let any body see this scrawl. Write to me very soon and believe me,

"Yours most affectionately,
C.E.P."

After Captain Ichabod's death in 1839, his daughter Lydia and her daughter Charlotte Elizabeth left Salem to make their home in Cambridge.

The following letters written by Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce tell much of the family history and gossip, and give a captivating picture of the mind and personality of Charlotte Elizabeth. The letters addressed to

"my dear Aunt" are undoubtedly written to her father's favorite sister, and *her* Aunt Betsy Peirce Nichols, second wife of George Nichols in Salem. They were undoubtedly written between 1857 and 1864, the year of Betsy Peirce's death:

"Cambridge, Aug 29, '57

"My dear Aunt,

I wrote to you and Susan last Sunday, but as the day is rainy I will have a little talk with you. How did you like Sarah Peck's poetry? All the first part of the week Uncle Ichabod (the Reverend of Portland) seemed really better, & when Henry left on Tuesday he said he felt encouraged about his father. On Friday however he had a severe attack of pain which continued all day; yesterday he was free from pain though he was very yellow, I called in to ask about him towards evening; sat some time with Aunt Martha. She said that Uncle looked too yellow that she did not want to see him. You know perhaps that the Portland people made him a very handsome present in money; so he has engaged a man this winter to drive him & wait upon him, attend to the furnace & etc. He is going to have his horse brought from Portland. . . . I am very glad that they are going to have a man-servant in the house, for he will save Aunt Martha, I think a good deal of waiting upon Uncle, in the way of handing him books, running up stairs, & down, & she does not look as if she could endure much fatigue, so we are thankful to have her spared all that is not absolutely necessary. Unless you could see her from day to day, you could not have any idea of her utter devotion to Uncle, we have felt very anxious lest she should be exerting herself too much but she has been wonderfully supported. Here I was interrupted by Bridget's asking me if she might go & pass the day with a "cousin" of hers in Roxbury, who has lately enriched the world with a young Irishman. I told her she might, only she must tell "Lizzie," her cousin to name the baby Benjamin Franklin, because it was born at the time of the laying of the Atlantic Cable (1857). I explained to Bridget my reasons for this wish I thought it would be the first Irish child so named & Benjamin Franklin would form a pleasing variety amongst the Patricks & Malachi's and Michaels. . . . On Monday Sarah, Ben & I went in a carryall to call at Aunt Mary's. We found all the family at home & not changed either for better or worse. Ben indeed looks more robust. We went to see Lucy Bowditch, who had got into her new house, which is quite handsome &

stately; it seems to be the present fashion to build houses so that they have apparently no-back-door the kitchen & all the outhouses, (if any) being concealed, I do not admire the fashion; when I see a house outside, it is pleasant to me to be able to form an opinion of the inside, just as it is when I see an individual. I always like those people best whose characters are excellent that they are not ashamed or afraid to carry them in their faces. I have often noticed that the finest people especially of the feminine gender are those who can not only receive visitors, sing, dance, draw, & do ornamental work, whose minds are highly cultivated, who can perhaps write books, but who are also well acquainted with the details of housekeeping, & are not above ironing a dress or making a pudding. There are some individuals to be sure whose peculiar situations either as politicians, lawyers, distinguished literati, clergymen demand that they should devote all their time & thoughts to their professions, but these people tell it in their faces & manner, just as we like to see a church look like a church, a school house like a school house. But I like to see a dwelling house say just as distinctly I am a dwelling house. I have rooms for company & enjoyment, & rest, & I have too within me the means & capabilities for rendering my occupants healthy & comfortable. I think a lady who seems to be above attending to the bodily comforts of her family is to say the least, a very uninteresting, & stupid sort of a person. Therefore the reason I do not like these new fangled houses is that they resemble those fine ladies & even if they have convenient kitchens are apparently ashamed of them. Who would wish for a house without a kitchen & why be ashamed of a kitchen if it is right & proper we should have? Aunt Sanders says she wants very much to see you all & wishes that when she next goes to Salem she could see Nancy Ashton. Now why cannot you & uncle & the Miss Ashtons take a carriage & come up together? I do not doubt but it would do you all good & certainly it would us. Our Bridget says that she believes I am always particularly happy when writing to you, & she is not mistaken. When I write to you I write all, for they all love you so dearly that they seem to consider you as part of themselves. So I see you all before me with kind & affectionate glances, & for the time being I almost forget that I am so far from you in body. When I write you or get letters from you it is refreshing as a visit almost. Then you dear living ones recall most vividly those beloved ones who are at rest in Heaven. Now I can see, hear grandfather Peirce. There is his hat with the stick inside it &

the brush beside it, on the piano, we are at the dinner table. Grandpa's hands spread out, he is asking the blessing. Then evening comes, we play all fours. I eat chestnuts, we talk, you knit & read to grandpa. Then father comes in from the office & we go home together. He telling me on the way about the Northern lights, or perhaps he is busy, thinking. We walk along in silence sometimes. Uncle Harry goes home with me & if it is very cold, we try to see who can walk fastest. Dear Aunty how much has happened since those days nearly fifty years ago. What a queer thing memory is. Would that all my recollections were as happy & innocent as those connected with you. No wonder I love dearly to write to you. Do not say "it is kind in Lizzie to write to me" for I love to do it. Can Sally still sing "The Mulberry Tree"? Goodby my dear Aunt & Uncle & cousins. Aunt Sanders sends her best love to you all. Don't forget to let me know when N. Ashton is in Salem. I have had another letter from Sarah Peck. Is it not funny to write & receive familiar letters from one I have never seen. Quite a contrast in my correspondents. You the dear old tried familiar friend, parts of myself, & she young, unseen; uncared for till within a year. Yet I feel greatly interested in her. I can't help hoping that she may become a true poet, which I do not really think our country has ever been blessed with. How delightful it would be if we could only have a poet, like David, rise up amongst us. Now I must again say goodbye because you have by this time forgotten that I said it before on the other page.

"Ever your loving neice
C.E. Peirce"

"Cambridge Nov 23d, 1857

"My dear Aunt

Since I was in Salem I have had two influenzas now I am pretty well. Mother is better & Uncle Ichabod continues improving in health — Lizzie will say "No room for improvement in other respects." Sarah will be glad to hear that Mother is well enough to preach — though her congregation is small she flatters herself it is very select — she does not receive pay in money — the bargain I believe is that the hearers shall pay in kind; though I doubt whether any of the sermons are quite as long as hers — her delight is to preach. I am not one of her listeners — for I never can overcome my natural dislike to sermons. Here in Cambridge we are all buying rattles Uncle Ichabod has two

— Uncle S. had one & we one — to frighten off the robbers.* If you do not think them good likenesses of Mother & Ben you may think of some others whom they have a closer resemblance. the lady looks frightened but brave the man composed & valiant but how scared the poor robbers are. The police man is certainly a smart fellow — luckily that he heard the rattles. I hope you have got one rattle at least. I had a letter from Mrs. Peck last week — whose daughter wrote Nothing to wear — or rather who originated the poem & composed the first 6 & last 18 lines. Buttler who said he was the author has lately published a poem — which I am told is good for nothing. My plants are in a very flourishing state — the Daphne is very cunning & I look at it many times every day; it is growing up & I keep a large tumbler over it. What is the name of the white flower which you gave me a slip of? it is growing famously. I have a fine Geranium potted for you — & shall try to send it up at Christmas unless it is too cold. I had a very pleasant call at Augusta's — what a charming little girl Lotty is She danced & sung, I asked her to come & live with me but she shook her head. I was very sorry to be so ill the day Augusta called. I was under the influence of opium, which I had taken the night before — Opium always affects me very disagreeably — I never have taken it but two or three times. I have however taken a good deal of Indian Hemp, an anodyne made from a plant, very like if not the same as our common hemp; it is made in the East Indies I have heard — & some suppose that the hot sun of tropical climates is necessary to call forth the anodyne properties of the plant — The last time I took the Indian Hemp — it had a very queer effect on me — making me feel as if in a waking dream — Since then I have not liked to take it. Is it not a strange world — this we live in — ? How little we know about it? It seems as if it would require a life time to find out all there is to be known about one single plant — common hemp for instance . . .

"Do you find cottons are selling very cheap in Salem. I saw at Hovey's the Bates cotton-shirting — selling for 11 cts pr. yard — & a very fine cotton (rather thin) yard wide for 10 cts! Allen is selling his things off & some of his goods are cheap though some are as dear as ever. I cannot buy anything for we are very poor this winter — I suppose we must be so as to be in the fashion. I wish dear Aunty Uncle

*a pen sketch of her mother & brother "rattling" at the burglars was included here.

& cousins that I could see you now — but we are not able to do all that we would like to by a great deal. Mother & Aunt & I send our best love to you all & hope you will have a happy Thanksgiving & imagine us with you — we shall you — here. Dont laugh at my picture — because that would hurt Mother's & Ben's feelings

"Yours ever most
affectionately
C. E. Peirce"

Cambridge
Aug. 6th 1858

"My dear Aunt,

Yesterday I took a second journey — a longer one than the one which I last wrote to you about. I went to Nahant! Helen came here on Thursday — her father & mother with Charley James & Herbert had gone to Springfield — Benjie was in Conway; therefore Helen came here, with the expectation of going to Nahant the next day to make a visit to Louisa Felton. It would not be proper or safe to let her go alone so I thought I would go with her. In the morning it rained — & this was a disappointment to all of us — to Helen who was impatient to be with Louisa on the beach — to me because I was desirous of passing a long day with Miss Bryant — & to Bridget who had made every arrangement the day before with regard to breakfast & dinner — so that she could be spared from the family at home without inconvenience. I wished to take Bridget on account of returning by the late boat in the evening. All the morning we watched the clouds, the weather-cocks & the rain — at length there were *certainly* signs of clearing up — and we sent Helen's trunk to the cars; & taking an early dinner — got into Boston by one o'clock — Mother hurrying us off lest we should be too late for the half past two boat. A carriage drove us to the boat — where we were obliged to take refuge in the cabin to escape getting wet by the pumps — hose — brooms & brushes which the men were spouting & dashing about in order to wash the deck. "How soon will this deck be washed?" I enquired. "Oh very soon — in about half an hour." I found a comfortable seat in the cabin & taking out my work — tried to forget the tediousness of the time by crocheting on a tidy. The Deck washing lasted about an hour — & then we could go up & enjoy the fresh sea air.

"We enjoyed our sail to Nahant very much — for I had been nearly baked in Cambridge & as I breathed in — & felt on my face the cool, moist & refreshing air — I felt almost as if I had passed out of some wicked place into paradise. Mrs. Bryant & Mrs. Lee who is staying at Mrs. Bryant's were very glad to see me & said I must absolutely stay all night. I told them I could not leave home for a night — that I must return in the six o'clock boat. I wish I had the pencil of a Raphael or a Murillo or Leonardo de Vinci to paint Mrs. Lee as I first saw her — I had best not attempt more than a verbal description. (Here a sketch is inserted with the caption "A poor attempt to draw Mrs. L. & Sammy"). You must imagine Mrs. Lee dressed in black, her cap a simple mourning one, the rings on her fingers her sole ornament; perched on her head sat the prettiest and drollest little monkey I ever beheld, with a face full of wisdom & cunning, beautiful fawn colored feet & tail & a round slender body — his hair soft & fine. Presently the servant came in bringing me some ice cream & fruit — & immediately little Sammy had leaped on my shoulder & was helping me to eat up my ice cream & fruit. Mrs. Bryant took him off from my shoulder, but he got away from her & was again making for my shoulder — when I escaped into another room, where I could enjoy my feast by myself — leaving Sammy to console himself on Mrs. Lee's cap. A very thick fog came up — & Mrs. Bryant said the boat would not come back; fortunately for us she was mistaken. At about half past six the Nelly Baker's signals were heard — & we went to the Landing — in spite of the fog & drizzling rain. I know Mother and Aunt S. would be very uneasy if we did not get home that evening. We had a delightful sail home, at first the fog prevented our seeing anything at a distance — but as soon as we had crossed *the bar* the fog had passed off — & the setting sun was illuminating Boston most gorgeously — & the sky & clouds were magnificent & lovely. We reached home about half past eight. Mother was in bed & asleep. We got some cold tea & some bread & gingerbread. We were so hungry that anything tasted good to us.

"The next day (I began this letter yesterday & was interrupted in the middle of it — & *today* is Sunday) Mother was not well — she is better this morning. Mrs. Carpenter has been very sick — with an apoplectic attack; she is better now. Catharine (Aunt Sander's girl) is going to start for the West, to see her brothers who have a farm in Iowa. She will set out probably on Wednesday next — when Aunt

& Uncle S. are going to Concord to pass a week or two. Aunt Martha has gone to Brattleborough. I suppose they will all return from their various places about the same time. With our warmest love to you all, dear Aunts, Uncles & Cousins — ever

"Your affectionate
C. E. Peirce"

"Cambridge, May 5, 1861

"My dear Aunt, Uncle & Cousins,

This pleasant afternoon I will enjoy myself with you. I went to church this morning & as one of the church members had Died last week Dr. Albro took the occasion to tell us something of Heaven & I was very much interested in the sermon. Now I would not have you understand that the Doctor gave any intimation that he spoke from his own personal knowledge of this blessed land or place, he merely explained or interpreted St. John's vision in the Revelation. Some say, "the Bible is a book easy to understand", "it is a book for the unlearned". This is indeed true, but it is also true that we all study the Bible forever and continually comprehend it better & better. It is the book for us on earth; it will be the book for us in Heaven. One of the Cambridge ministers is Dr. Newall & the most quiet & demure little body imaginable. He never says an imprudent thing, or a silly one — seldom makes a downright assertion excepting he is sure that it cannot well be contradicted; consequently you will not be surprised to hear that among his favorite topics of discourses are the seasons, the changes of day & night, flowers, trees, &c. concerning which there cannot be any important differences of opinion. One Sunday he thought he would enliven his discourse by a fairy tale — serving to illustrate the advantages of trial & suffering to the characters of people. He said, "There was once a Queen of the Fairies," so "Lizzie's" letter continues, as she writes delightedly of the discursive Sermon . . . in describing how the Queen held discourse with a congregation of lobsters, — evidently regarded by the Queen as the plainest and most dull of God's creatures, — however, creatures by no means without their own particular cause for hope:

"But in order to be more beautiful, and to exchange your dull hue and appearance, you will have to submit to a painful process of boiling," so the Queen of the Fairies told the lobster "congregation."

"Only one valiant lobster stepped, or crawled, forward, sufficiently

brave for this test and transformation. But it was indeed accomplished, — and he stepped forth from the black pot of boiling water attired in a new and beautiful red!

"The other lobsters flocked round him, & presently their fear turned into admiration of this scarlet uniform & they began to desire the same for themselves. "Where can we get a red coat?" was the question. "My friends, said he, you can procure one, but only as I did mine. You must submit to the painful process of being boiled." Thus ends Mr. Newall's lobster sermon. It was preached several years ago, but I trust that it will prove especially applicable now, that our whole dear country seems to be undergoing a boiling process. May it come out so bright & beautiful that every nation on the earth may admire it. Is it true, what I heard from Caroline Saltonstall, that some application was made to Maria for money & she declined giving any on the grounds that she disapproved the war, whereupon a sort of caracature was made of her between two soldiers & other things besides were done? I could not believe it. I think there must be some mistake. Do write at once & tell me just the thing as it happened. As to unionists here, those who were for the Union last year, are quite as much for it now. "The *Stars & Stripes,* the *Union,* the *Constitution, Washington, our Country*" there are our watchwords. With the wise & good other differences are swallowed up in one great cause, that of *patriotism.* We work, we pray, we live, we would die for our country & her laws. And now while our armies have gone & are marching (to die, perhaps) for us, shall we, at home lay plans against our Constitution? If I am willing to fight for the Constitution shall I be patient while another destroys it? The North has risen as one man to defend our country against Southern seceders. Just at this very moment Elizabeth Peabody, comes to Cambridge with a petition for government to pay for liberating some slaves? What have we got to do now with this question? Why should a silly & troublesome & injudicious woman be allowed to go about with her miserable petitions, instead of doing as every woman should in this momentous crisis — leave our president & the cabinet & wise men to manage the concerns of the nation. But for Elizabeth Peabody to be prowling about making mischief & trying to bring herself before the public, it is too bad. As to Maria I know she is at heart a true patriot, only she loves peace and hates war & she does not realize yet that we are *only being boiled to become red.* As to, E. Peabody, the constitution, our country, its laws, our forefathers,

are nothing to her, in comparison with herself, & with regard to the blacks, she would not even have one of her eyes put out to liberate the whole of them. This I seriously feel. We must be true to our country & all will come right. E. Peabody, I know is an insignificant body, but there is tinder, there are shavings, & plenty of combustibles in our land & the wise & loyal must keep on the watch. I am very sure that if Uncle George had a hundred dollars which he wished to have studiously expended he would not put it onto the hands of such a person as E. Peabody, & yet here she is allowed to go about with petitions to Congress. Mr. Charles Adams & Mr. Sumner, I heard, told her that now is not the time for such a petition. Still she goes on. She kept a miserable school, she made a wreched translation, she never did succeed in her undertakings — but yet here she is poking & stirring the embers & doing all she can to excite dissention. The fact is, a good boiling process would be especially beneficial to her & her clique. Our Constitution, our laws, are too sacred things to be handled by profane hands. Wise men say, that ours is the best government that the world has ever been blest with. Certainly ignorant women, who think themselves, wise & fanatics must not be allowed to tamper with it. Elizabeth Peabody, a million such, could not manage a common school! How disgusting when they pretend to dictate to our rulers, to amend a constitution, so wise that it seems as if inspired! I wish she knew how to sew or cook, but she could not even boil a lobster! In common times even treasonable petitions might be allowed to take their course, but not now, so I think you all agree with me, of course. One common danger, one common love, one common hope, must unite the North & then we shall soon become the most brilliant & flaming scarlet that was ever beheld. Man has the cooking of a lobster. God is cooking us & I feel that all will end well for us, only I hope that such meddlesome bodies as E. Peabody, will keep quiet for they may be the means of prolonging our time of trouble. The great question now to be settled is (so it seems to me) government or no government. All minor questions will easily be adjusted by proper authorities afterwards. The fact is if some turbulent fanatics are allowed to have their way, our country will share the fate of the King of Spain, who was actually burnt up in his chair, while the nobles in attendance were disputing about whose duty it was to prevent the sad catastrophe either by removing the king or extinguishing the fire. Tomorrow I expect to go to Boston & shall take this letter & the

record of Henry to be sent to you. I hope you will write as soon as you receive it. Mother & aunt send their best love. I send mine & lots of kisses too. We want to see you all very much —

Your loving, patriotic & sincere Lizzie.

"I read this letter to Mother, who says, "Well they do not need one bit of boiling." By "they" she meant you, my dear Aunt Uncle & Cousins. The reasons I do not send my especial love to my dear Chestnut St. cousins is because this letter is to them as being my "Cousins."

"Ever yours,
C.E.P."

"Cambridge, Jan 13, 1863

"My dear Aunt,

Good morning. What a charming day; a summer temperature within, a fine bracing air without! "How grateful we ought to be for all our innumerable blessings," is one of the sayings on everybody's lips, & continually recurring to ourselves — yet even the best scholars in the lessons of gratitude to Him, to whom we owe every blessing, feel that they are but beginners. It often seems to me strange that I can ever waste my time even (without speaking of the sad injury to my heart & mind) in repining when I know that the possession of the things which are denied me, would only work me harm. Now you, with the Paradise directly opposite, another Paradise in future prospect & a third Paradise within the walls of your happy home, are I guess, among the first scholars in the heavenward school of gratitude. I think that a family of grateful & contented hearts forms a sort of oasis in the desert of human life, with all its unfruitful cares, & longings.

"I have been thinking this morning that perhaps we might hire a furnished house for the summer in Salem & perhaps after a few months residence in his old town Uncle Sanders might find himself so well & happy there, as to wish to reside there permanently. Now some family might like to pass the summer abroad & prefer letting their house to having it remain vacant & thus give us a good chance for trying our experiment. 'Cousin' Bertram for instance, don't they want to go to Europe again? Now you are laughing & calling me the same old sixpence, full of plans & nonsense. Then I will not say another word on the subject. We enjoyed Sarah's visits to us very much indeed. I called

to see the future Mrs. Col. Hinks* & had from Susan a long and particular account of the matter. Susan says she will bring the Col. to see us when he returns to Cambridge. Last Saturday afternoon I went to our Sewing Circle meeting at Sarah's. I had a very nice time. We sewed on woolen shirts, Aunt Sanders gave the flannel of which they were made for the sick & wounded soldiers. I feel more & more impatient for the war to terminate. Yet I begin to fear that, like the Israelites in the Wilderness we have got 40 years of trouble before us to cure us of our pride, impiety, idolatry, discontent &c. Till we are fitted to reenter the banaan of Peace. We are the Israelites, the chosen people sent here to worship God in purity & with the heart & if we only do this, each individual of this great nation — all minor questions will be easily settled even what shall be done with the negroes will be be made clear to us.

"Wednesday, 14th, Ben & Bertie came over to breakfast & we had very nice buckwheat cakes. Yesterday afternoon Henry & Lizzie came out & took tea with us & you cannot think how much we all enjoyed their visit. I wish they could only come often, but this is too much to expect from them. How much better Lizzie looks than she did last week. She & Henry were in excellent spirits. They went up in the evening to George's to see the Colonel. Mother had a long talk with Henry & he appeared to be interested in her reminiscences of Washington & Portsmouth. She is very fond of him & of Lizzie & she & Aunt have been praising them up this morning. We were speaking of apples last evening & I told Lizzie of a new way of making apple dumplings, which Henry thought you might like to know about. So I will tell you. Take four or five gills of flour, salt it, then mix it onto a stiff paste with boiling water, stirring it very hard as you pour in the water. You must be sure that the water boils hard so as to scald the flour. This makes a very light & tender paste. If used for dumplings as large as grandma used to make, 20 minutes will be enough to boil them. It is said to be more wholesome than the common paste, made with butter or lard, & of course it is less expensive. Mrs. Peabody (the professor's wife) calls it 'the apple dumpling without expenses.' To be eaten with a rich wine sauce.

"Maria called here yesterday, I was very sorry to hear that Mrs. William Neal is so poorly. Maria seems to be very fond of Mr. Harkins

*Elizabeth (Lilly) Peirce Nichols

& said 'he is a very excellent man.' She was going to dine at the Abbotts at five o'clock. What a snow storm we are having. It will be a good chance for me to make my drawers which I cut out yesterday. I bought my dresses for the spring & summer a few days ago because they say things are going to be so very dear next spring. I got two brilliants 50 cts. for one, 40 cts for the brown one & a thibet for which I gave 1.50 per yard, a very good width & all bought at Allen's. The cheap cotton & wool goods do not wear well as I use my dresses. It is better economy for me to get real articles that I can wear first for handsome dresses & afterward *wear out in* the house. This *out* & *in* is a funny expression. What a difference in the meaning a few letters make. Wear, wear out. Wear out in, wear in. Just consider no wonder there are such disputings about the sense of the Bible. I have got a splendid new Bible, which I shall carry down to show you some time. I mean to go to T. as soon as the length of days will permit. Mother & Aunt send their very best love to you all. I must make haste to finish & go about my housecleaning first & sewing afterwards.

"Good bye my dear Aunt & Uncle & Cousins from your ever very affectionate,

Lizzie"

Charlotte's last letter was written to her niece Augusta Nichols in Salem:

"33 Kirkland St.
Cambridge, Mass.
Feb. 16, 1888

"Dear Augusta

. . . In the afternoon Miss Mary Peabody called on me. We talked about Cambridge or Concord as places of residence. She said Concord was lovely, but it was much colder in winter and warmer in summer than Cambridge, and as it was damp in summer there was malaria there. That settles it for us as a place of residence, but we must go there for a few weeks in the late Spring, as a pilgramage to the shrine of Emerson. You will be glad to hear that brick and stone sidewalks are being laid in many parts of Cambridge, and plank walks are very abundant . . . "

The third child of Benjamin Peirce and Lydia Nichols was destined to a brilliant career as Professor at Harvard in mathematics and astronomy:

"Benjamin Peirce, Jr. born in 1809 in Salem, attended Salem private grammar school, and entered Harvard in 1825, graduating in 1829. In college Benjamin devoted himself deeply to Mathematics carrying his study far beyond the narrow limits of the other college courses. He was a frequent visitor of Dr. Bowditch (Nathaniel Bowditch the navigator) from whom he received valuable instruction. In 1831 he returned to Harvard as tutor, and in 1833 at 24 years of age became Professor of Natural Philosophy and Mathematics, and in 1843 Perkins Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy, and by 1849 was acknowledged one of the foremost mathematicians and eminent men of science in 19th century America.

"In 1833 Benjamin Peirce, Jr. married Sarah Mills, daughter of Elijah Hunt Mills of Northampton, United States Senator from Massachusetts."*

Benjamin and his wife, Sarah Mills, had three children: James Mills Peirce, who became an outstanding mathematician and taught as a full Professor at Harvard for approximately 50 years; a daughter Helen who married Benjamin Ellis; and a son, Charles Sanders, born 1839 and named for his great uncle Charles Sanders of Salem.

Benjamin Peirce, Jr., appears to have been greatly loved and appreciated by his Harvard colleagues. A poem of many charming stanzas was written in his honor at the time of his death, by his close friend Oliver Wendell Holmes:

BENJAMIN PEIRCE
1809-1880

For him the Architect of all
Unroofed our planet's starlit hall;
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.

How vast the workroom where he brought
The viewless implements of thought!

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*Thomas S. Knight, *Charles S. Peirce, Great American Thinkers Series,* Washington Square Press, 1965. Reprinted by permission of the Publisher.

Farewell! the spirit needs must rise,
So long a tenant of the skies —
Rise to that home all worlds above
Whose sun is God, whose light is love.*

Benjamin's own words may here be aptly quoted:

"Is this magnificent display of ideality a human delusion? Or is it a divine record? The heavens and the earth have spoken to declare the glory of God. It is not a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing. It is the poem of an infinite imagination signifying immortality!"

**Atlantic Monthly,* Dec., 1880.

IX

CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE AND CONTINUANCE

Charles Sanders Peirce, born to Benjamin Jr. and his wife Sarah Mills on September 10, 1839, lived to be an outstanding intellect of 19th century America: scientist, mathematician and philosopher who is today credited with having conceived the one original American philosophy, pragmatism, and having profoundly influenced the philosophic thought of the 19th century and our own time. Charles appears to have given to his father all credit for his lifelong work and interest in the logic of mathematical science and philosophy. His father insisted from his own earliest childhood on proof of every statement and idea no matter how trifling. Further, young Charles realized the advantage of his upbringing in his father's house, where he was constantly exposed to the most brilliant and thoughtful minds and personalities of his time. Not only were the warm neighborhood friends of Cambridge and Harvard made welcome at the hearth of Benjamin and his wife Sarah, but the distinguished visitors from other universities of our own country and Europe sought acquaintance and conversation with the charming and brilliant Benjamin Jr.

Benjamin's congenial young son Charles did not have an outstandingly brilliant career at Harvard. In fact, he seems during his college years to have rather neglected his academic pursuits, to have been more interested in his own casual reading and research and to have developed quite a flair for clothes and society.

Charles graduated from Harvard in 1859 and then returned to the college for a short period as tutor and assistant at the Harvard Observatory. He was interested in teaching and communicating to others his own thought and conclusions in logic, which he felt the underlying science of all else. But his lifelong desire to become a Professor as his older brother James Mills Peirce at Harvard was never to be granted. He never held an academic post except for the years 1879-1884 when he lectured at Johns Hopkins University.* His classes were small, and it was a bitter disappointment when after a period of

*Murray G. Murphy, *Crowell-Collier Encyclopaedia,* Vol. 18, 1962.

three years his contract was not renewed. This was the only position to gratify his great desire to teach, to impart his own knowledge insofar as possible to youth — even to "dull young men." In this connection the editor of Peirce's important posthumously published works on *Chance, Love and Logic* has the following introduction by its editor: "One university in our country, the Johns Hopkins, has here alone recognized that the function of a university is the production of knowledge, and teaching only a necessary means to that end." We know that in 1869, ten years after his graduation from Harvard, Peirce "delivered a lecture before the Lowell Institute of Boston."*

Charles was able probably through his father, to obtain a position with the Coast Survey which he described as "agreeable to me" and to which his brilliant mathematical mind certainly suited him. This work on the Survey, which took him on many a trip, he held many years, in fact until his retirement to his Pennsylvania farm in the mid-1880's.

The chief interest here in Charles Sanders Peirce is how his thought was affected by his Salem family, and how in turn it may be evaluated in the light of the family history. When the philosopher first considered what were the most important and significant events of his life, he started quite simply and naturally with his having been born. The next great event recorded was "I visited Salem when three years old." This visit he evidently considered of great importance and even at this very tender age, he remembered every detail for the remainder of his life. As he was a most thoughtful man and entirely scientific in his observations, what, we might ask, could explain this? I cannot believe that in this instance, with his character and mind, his remembrance was basically what he had heard of Salem. I believe the impression was deep and his own, probably felt through some long previous continuance of his family in this place

In the *Writings of Peirce* edited by Wiener we have Peirce's own account of the important events of his youth up to his graduation from Harvard in 1859:

1839 Sept. 10, Tuesday Born
1840 Christened
1841 Made a visit to Salem which I distinctly remember
1842 July 31st Went to church for first time

*Frederick Clifton Peirce, *Notes on the Peirce Family,* Hamilton Press, Hartford, Conn., 1880.

1843 Attended a marriage
1844 Fell violently in love
1845 Moved into new house on Quincy Street
1846 Stopped going to M'am Lessicus and began to go to Miss Ware's. Learnt much and fell violently in love with another Miss W—
1847 Began to be most seriously and hopelessly in love — sought to drown my cares by taking up study of Chemistry, an antidote which long experience enables me to recommend as sovereign
1848 Wrote a History of Chemistry
1853 Set up for a fast man and became a bad school boy
1854 Left the High School with honor — after having been turned out several times.
1855 Graduated at Dixwells (School) and entered college 1855. Read Schillers Aesthetic Letters and began study of Kant.
1856 Sophomore gave up idea of being a fast man and undertook pursuit of pleasure
1857 Junior — gave up pursuit of pleasure and undertook to enjoy life.
1858 Senior — gave up enjoying life and exclaimed Vanity of Vanities.

Biographers of Charles Peirce have wondered at the overall tragedy of his life. Reviewing this life in the light of family history I would say that it was to be expected; the fate of a Peirce of extreme sensitivity, and the mental capacity of genius, would be subject to that characteristic of courting tragedy and tragedy him. As we have been forced to remark reviewing the lives of several members of the family from Jerathmiel on, the Peirces appeared to suffer beyond the average in adversities.

Charles Sanders Peirce was born to a fortunate life endowed with every advantage of mental, spiritual and family distinction, yet his most important desires and his supreme efforts seem to have been thwarted from his graduation on.

Charles made a conventionally favored marriage to Melissina Fay, daughter of a prominent Boston family. But he divorced her years afterward "for deserting him," when she refused to accompany him on one of his trips to Europe made for the Geodetic Survey in 1883. After his divorce he was married almost immediately to a Frenchwoman, Juliett Froissey.

"By 1884 almost everything in Peirce's life seemed to have gone against him. He was dropped from his teaching position at Johns Hopkins; his association with the Coast Survey was deteriorating; his brother Professor James Peirce of Harvard appears to have abandoned him. (It is reasonable to believe that his divorce and remarriage may have offended his New England family.) He returned with his delicate French wife to live in retirement and poverty on an abandoned farm at Milford, Pa., bought with a legacy left him by his father."*

He translated into his philosophy and spirit the everyday happenings in the life of his family which we may see recorded in the family lives and letters for two hundred years or more. His basic idea was that pragmatism, christened by him from the Greek word *pragma,* is the philosophy of the practical, that the function of thought is merely a guide to right action and life. Certainly the Nichols-Peirce family was before all a family which valued and lived by practical application. Another concept of Peirce's was the value and theory of continuance. In this theory it did not matter that this or that undertaking or man should fail in his endeavor; the principal thing was to continue. "... without really striving for it mankind accomplishes all that is required; they bring forth another generation to advance history a step..." The Nichols family letters, events and undertakings for generation after generation record family baptisms, weddings, deaths, anniversaries and voyages, and the thought of the family philosopher was founded on these minute practicalities of family life; yet his thinking transcended time and struck the universal chord. He wrote often, abstractly to be sure, of love, life and logic. All these were in most serious reference to Man's essential place in this universe. "Love — truth are the realities" he wrote, "These alone are proven, they are real to me... Justice and Truth are the greatest Powers on Earth."

So Charles evaluated and realized. He absorbed and computed in himself and in the family of Man the entire life lived by his own family; and he had to relate this life to that which all families lived. A long and serious undertaking to Charles was a family record which we may find is written in clear and most minute pen strokes on the back of a book of Logarithms on which Charles was working.

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*Knight, Thomas S., *Charles Peirce, Great American Thinkers Series.* Washington Square Press. 1965. Permission to quote granted by the Publisher.

In spite of his closeness to his father, his gay companionships of the Harvard years and ultimately his two marriages, Charles seems ever to have been a fundamentally lonely man. There are few family letters either to or from him, but his deep attachment to his sister and his dependence on her, even some years after his graduation from Harvard is evident in the letter quoted below:

"New York, January 31, 1866

"My Dear Sister:

This is a business letter, and as you see, on a business sheet of paper, or rather a business half sheet, for I see that it is curtailed of its fair proportions. I enclose you a certified check on the Continental Bank for $200 payable to the order of the Professor which I wish to pay to you on Mother's account for Board. Will you contrive to let her know some time that I have paid you this sum, for I see the dear old lady will be a little unhappy till she knows it is actually done. I wonder if we realize what an unspeakable mercy it is that she has been spared to us so long. Somehow or other I should feel as if I was almost alone in the world if I had not someone I could call Mother, and though the best of sisters you would not let me apply that epithet to you. I am sure that Anna wouldn't and besides neither of you would be my mother, though I called you so a thousand times, and so my daily prayer is that she may be long continued to us, and she really seems with "intervals of depression" (a quotation which Anna can explain, but which has escaped my memory) to enjoy life as much as most of us. She seemed to me particularly well this winter.

"I came in the cars the other day with W. Edward Dickinson of Amherst, and he got upon the subject of old times in Northampton. He was a student in the Law School at Northampton and had a great deal to say about Father. He is a somewhat cold person in his views of men and things, but on that subject he became quite enthusiastic, and he also spoke of the great impressions which Mother's dignity of manners and character made upon him in those days; and that was 40 years ago. I will not believe it. What a dream it makes of life. However, I shall become sad and dolorous if I stop to moralize and so I will simply say that through all the chances and changes of this mortal life, I am and shall always be

"Your affectionate Brother
Charles"

This letter to his sister showing his affection for and his spiritual dependence on both her and his mother reflects his extreme tenderness of feeling. A most touching series of letters written to his close friend, William James, "Willie" to Charles, are concerned with the sad lot of Harvard's philosopher and scholar, the aging Abbott. The unknown Charles, following closely all that transpired in the realm of thought and philosophy at Harvard's intellectual center, corrected and chastised James most severely for his criticism of the then ill and unpopular older philosopher Abbott. "There should never be unkind criticism," Charles wrote "in the pure realm of thought and scholarship . . . *There should be a fraternity of scholars.*"

Abbott had been severely criticised in Harvard circles, and particularly by the influential Royce; but Peirce wrote in a letter to his friend James:

"Abbott you say is almost insane . . . if he is in such a state of mind, all the more reason for gentle treatment. Let us insist that sincere students shall treat one another with gentleness."

Apparently the unkind jibes continued, and Peirce, thoroughly roused by what to him seemed most unjust and cruel treatment of the elderly philosopher, wrote directly to President Eliot of Harvard asking that he insist that Royce, one of the critics be requested to apologize. In fact his letter very greatly provoked Eliot who ordered Peirce off the reservation after a bitter correspondence in favor of the Unitarian Abbott.*

A few months after Charles had tried to intervene in his behalf, Abbott in his sensitive depression took his own life.

In the year 1875 Charles had written from Paris to his friend William James in Boston of being "lonely and excessively depressed." But on the question of a return to Harvard and Cambridge, he had also written:

"Cambridge is antagonistic to me. I don't want to be Charlie Eliot's man, besides, I don't want and I do not know that I could honorably disconnect myself from the Survey now . . . On the other hand in a Chair of Logic (undoubtedly he was thinking of Harvard) I should be using my best powers which I shall never use otherwise."

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*Wiener, Philip P., *Values in a Universe of Chance*. Permission to quote granted by the author.

It is to be presumed that with his patience, his humility, his love of humanity, and his own deep thought and scholarship, Charles would have made an outstanding teacher. But in spite of the entreaty to his influential friend James to find him some job, no matter how small or poorly paid at Harvard, to which he had an almost fanatic devotion, his pleas remained unsatisfied: "I like to teach poor and dull young men," he wrote in a letter to James, "and even should there be but a few students at Harvard whom I might teach, just two or three, or even only one, so long as I could teach him, I would be satisfied." James, himself, was thoroughly satisfied that Charles would be an outstanding teacher; he went personally to President Eliot and wrote letters to persuade him of this, but it was of no avail. Charles remained in his remote farm at Milford, Pa., practically starving, and entirely unemployed for years; but he continued his work in spite of all obstacles on the development of his philosophy, for which, as he wrote James, "I seem to have been born."

"Like many scientists of the 19th Century, Peirce was deeply disturbed by the religious controversies which followed the publication of Darwin's work. Opposed to dogmatic theology, yet convinced that science was not atheistic, Peirce attempted to create a philosophic system which would embody the methods and results of science, and yet be consistent with Christianity."*

In 1893 he wrote from Milford, Pa.:

"My dear William —

"I enclose a first proof of a prospectus of my great book — you are widely known — and command the admiring credence of the public. I am unknown. I ask you therefore to write me a little note which I can print, expressive of your interest in this publication. I am more sick of life than I can tell you — I have of late received blows from which I can never recover, and no amount of wealth, consideration and fame could ever make life anything but a horrid bore to me — but the duty I have to do is to publish this book, provided the public will pay for it — if enough people will subscribe for it to keep me above ground, I will go on — if not, it is a good riddance on my part, and on the world's . . . "

**Crowell-Collier Encyclopaedia.*

Again he wrote with reference to the projected work which absorbed him:

"If the Carnegie Institute will do nothing my duty will still be to continue, and endeavor to do the work I seem to have been put into the world to do . . ."

Finally, the prospectus of his book was printed and sent out asking subscriptions to as large a list as its writer could afford in postage stamps! But the hoped-for response to the unknown author living on his wisdom and his hope alone was never realized in his lifetime; nor was the book, written in a huge manuscript destined to fill twelve volumes, accounting for many years of labor, published while its author lived.

Peirce's health and strength declined, no doubt due to his life of privation and disappointment; for the fifteen last years of his life he was further plagued by a painful and persistent stomach cancer which finally carried him off in his seventy-third year, shortly before the death of his great and constant friend, William James.

After his death, Peirce's star of fame began to rise; Harvard which had rejected him again and again, and broken his heart, and no doubt his health, finally recognized him as their outstanding philosopher. Every line that he wrote in his scattered notes and notebooks was treasured and given its important place in the most learned Harvard collections. His fame in philosophic thought and procedure began to spread far beyond Harvard, and to be recognized not only throughout this country, but in France and England as well. The philosophy of pragmatism developed by Charles Peirce was finally hailed as the one original American philosophy, and the very foundation of American philosophic thought.

Harvard felt it a distinction to publish Charles Sanders Peirce's twelve volumes on the principles of philosophy and logic. This stupendous manuscript, as well as his notebooks and meaningful letters, were sold to Harvard at his death by his frail, penurious widow for five hundred dollars. Today, scores of books exist, and no doubt will be written for many years to come, concerning this humble man and profound thinker and scholar. In the Widener Library at Harvard today, as in university libraries throughout this country, we find more than one copy of Charles S. Peirce's notable book, *Chance, Love and Logic.*

In his introduction to this posthumously published volume, its editor, Harry S. Cohan, evaluated Peirce's mind in these ringing words:

"Two main purposes have guided the planning of the present collection of Peirces:

1. To introduce the reader to the many sides of the most versatile profound and original philosopher the United States has ever produced.
2. To include unpublished and inaccessible material in which Peirce presented the cultured and humanistic aspects of science and philosophy."

The educator John Dewey evaluates Peirce as follows:

"Many and diverse are the minds that form the philosophic community.

1. Great masters — the system builders.
2. Philologists, in a more narrow sense Scholars. These dig not only for facts or roots, but also for the stones which serve either for building or destruction.
3. Remote from all these, are the intellectual rovers who, in their search for new fields, venture into the thick jungle that surrounds the little patch of cultivated science. They are not gregarious creatures — these lonely pioneers; and in their wanderings they often lose touch with those who tread the beaten paths. Those that return to the community often speak strangely of strange things. Few now-a-days question the great value of these pioneer minds; — but universities, like other institutions, can only find place for those who work well in harness — Charles S. Peirce was certainly one of these pioneer souls with the fatal gift of genuine originality."

It is matter for proud and satisfying contemplation that from this family stemming from the "witch" Susanna Martin, and from a line of seafaring men, pioneering homesteaders and quiet scholars, there should be born a man of humble, modest and homely life and thought, and yet a mind which pioneered in the thought of his own century as of our times as well. Today this mind contributes its clear logic and metaphysical awareness to the never-ending question of the relationship of science and metaphysics.

**Values in a Universe of Chance* — Wiener, *Introduction,* Stanford University Press, 1958.

In his own words Peirce summed up his surprisingly modern belief: "Continuity implies unity, a holding together, the eternal unity of the creative power. This power may best be conceived through the admittedly vague conception or experience of God."

X

GEORGE — FATHER AND SON

As SOMEONE HAS SAID, there are two sorts of people — those who do better under adversity and those who thrive in prosperity. The Nichols seem to have been of the former type, the Peirces, the latter. Sale of his beloved house on Federal Street in Salem killed Jerathmiel Peirce; his sensitive son, Benjamin Peirce, thought that this sale might well prove disastrous for his father, whom he outlived by but three years. George Nichols, Jerathmiel's son-in-law, ruined in 1826 with his father-in-law and his father, seems to have rather welcomed his misfortune as a spur to new endeavor for himself and wrote to his son George while a student at Harvard:

"My children may to an easy observer appear to have suffered from my change of circumstances a great calamity, but to a reflecting mind it may appear otherwise. They are called on to make exertions which would not have been the case had success attended my business, and to insure success they are left to feel that they must merit it."

Captain George's eldest son George, Jr., was born to him and his wife Sally in 1809 in Salem. The boy had a brilliant start in the grammar school of Salem to which many outstanding report cards in the family collection attest:

"Being curious to know how much improvement I have made at school since the certificates were first given out, I looked them over and found that in 8 certificates which I received from June through August, I had 99 Perfect, 7 Good, & 2 Bad Lessons; 6 absences & 6 Tardinesses; Conduct Good invariably. From Sept. through Nov., 9 Certificates, 133 Perfect, 9 Goods, 0 Bads; 11 Absences, 4 Tardinesses; Conduct, the same. From December through February, 13 Certificates, 131 Perfects, 5 Goods, 0 Bads; 2 Absences, 0 Tardinesses; Conduct the same."

From the year 1823, we know much of George Jr. his life and character, for he kept a journal, remarkable for the unusually mature thought of this boy 15, but also for his observation of the scenes and

personalities around him, and his gift in description. In his diary he tells of a journey by stagecoach in 1823 from Portland, Maine, where he was undoubtedly on a visit to his uncle, The Rev. Ichabod Nichols:

"Took my departure in the mail stage from Portland, and after a pleasant ride of three and one-half hours, arrived in Kennebunk where we breakfasted.

"Portsmouth is very pleasantly situated on the Piscataqua, and nothing can be pleasanter than seeing 30 or 40 canoes managed by women entirely, carrying loads of provisions to market. Pa says he used to stand hours together to see them . . . "

The journal began, significantly, on his father's birthday, July 4, and is well worth quoting:

"Monday, Sept. 15th, 1823: . . .Went with John into Mrs. Saunders after school, to see some Indians who were there. One of them, the father of the other two, spoke English very fluently. All of them were very likely men, particularly the young men. After conversing some time, Mrs. Saunders offered some wine to them, and I was not a little surprised to see them refuse it. They shortly after went out to show us their skill in the use of the bow. The oldest of the two brothers was very expert in the use of it; knocking down a quarter of a dollar at a distance of 3 rods. The manner in which they take aim is very singular, they at first turn their arrow over and over, as I suppose to get it exactly in the centre of the bow — they then aim up, then down, and afterward, at the mark. They are of the Penobscot tribe, and came to get a Roman Catholic Priest to go down to them from Boston. At going away, the father came & shook hands with Mr. Saltonstall, very politely. They were dressed very well. The sons had a good deal of red on the collars of their coats, but the father was dressed very plain . . . "

"Wednesday, Nov. 5th, 1823: . . . Bonfires were made this evening, in memory of 'Gunpowder Treason', but the constables soon stopped them."

"Friday, Nov. 7th, 1823: . . . This morning's mail brought news of the surrender of *Cadiz* to the French. Spain! thou art a poor, devoted country! Left to the mercy of a meddling nation, even by thine own natives thy most strenuous advocates are now silenced; and those

who once beheld thee with commiseration, now turn from thee in disgust . . . "

"Saturday, Nov. 15th, 1823: . . . We were examined in Geography and Arithmetic, and likewise read, each, a piece of composition . . . After the examination was finished, Mr. Pickering delivered an address in which he greatly commended the boys for their good behavior & improvement, which they generally manifested. He likewise spoke of our composition, as having given great satisfaction, and as being (though, perhaps, I ought not in modesty to repeat it) *not inferior to that which Cambridge students are wont to exhibit.* With respect to the right pronunciation of Latin words, he said that it was extremely necessary in order to form the elegant scholars. As an instance of this he says 'I happened, some years since, to be present at an examination of the Latin School in Boston. Among the spectators was a foreign gentleman; a man of the most polished education, with whom I was acquainted. While the examination was going forward, I was particularly struck with the appearance of one of the lads, who pronounced his words with the greatest exactness. I mentioned the circumstance to this gentleman, who concurred in my opinion, saying, he did recite extremely well, but he did say, 'revocat.' An extraordinary proof of the quickness, with which any one, who has received a polished education, may catch at the smallest deviation from the correct pronunciation. I finished my term in writing school; which, I think, I have attended with no small profit . . . "

"1823 November: Somewhat of a serious accident occurred at the circus this evening . . . *one* had his leg broken . . . thank fortune that I was not there.

"P.S." I have since learnt that no one's leg was broken; and so "Mr. Editor of the *Salem Gazette*" you see you were mistaken."

"Wednesday, 21st December, 1823. I stopped the *Gazette,* The *Observer* being preferred to it."

This excerpt from the youthful diary of George Nichols, Jr. shows the embryo editor.

"Monday, Nov. 17th, 1823: Cloudy weather and cold. In the afternoon, a very slight fall of snow. *The Friendship* arrived this morning, 56 days from Rio Janeiro. Uncle Peirce was left at Lima. Went off aboard with Pa, in the Customs House boat. She has made a

losing voyage, as Pa says. Capt. Meek gave me his letters, which I carried to the Post Office, and obtained $1.66 for them . . . "

"Thursday, Nov. 20th, 1823: . . . Thanksgiving Day . . . After meeting Lydia, John, Elizabeth, Henry & myself went to Grandpa Peirce's, where we had a most excellent dinner . . . "

"Friday, Nov. 21st, 1823: . . . We had letters from Uncle Henry of the *Nautilus,* announcing his arrival at New York, 47 days from Elsineur. Went on board the *Friendship,* in the C.H. boat. The F. came up to the Crowninshield wharf today. Dined and drank tea at Grandpa Nichols'. Capt. Meek called there this afternoon. He gave an account of his voyage, adventures, &c. Describing Lima, he says, 'It is one of the most beautiful, and at the same time, most remarkable places on the globe. In going from Callao to Lima, about 8 miles, you see, on the right and left, orange trees loaded with fruit, while directly in front of you are the Andes, covered with perpetual snow. It never rained, snowed, thundered & lightened at Lima. The city is well watered with streams, which flow from the mountains. The houses have no roofs of any consequence; the tops of them are flat, and composed of boards with mats placed upon them, and then mud thrown over the whole. The climate is mild, & pleasant, although the city is situated in latitude 12 deg. south' . . . Capt. Meek gave John and me each a whale's tooth; It is composed of fine ivory."

"Saturday, Nov. 22nd, 1823: . . . Went on board the *Friendship* this morning. John got piece of a stick which grew on Juan Fernandez' Island, the fabled residence of Robinson Crusoe. . . . Aunt Sally came this afternoon. While hunting for the cow, as I was in a field, was attacked by a dog, but made out to beat him off with my hat. The anniversary of Pa's and Ma's marriage; it being 22 years. Sally thinks that she has been rather better this week. Pa bought ½ bushel sweet potatoes, 50 cts."

"Monday, Nov. 24th, 1823: . . . Ma's birthday; 43 years old. Pa went to Beverly for Dr. Fisher to come out and prescribe for Sally. He is considered very skilful in such cases. Did not consider her case as alarming but thought she would not get well this winter. Gave her a bottle of medicine. She removed from the front to the back chamber, on account of the latter being warmer than the former. Aunt Betsy drank tea with us. Aunt Ropes called while we were at tea. Grandpa Peirce called after tea."

"Sunday, Dec. 21st, 1823: Pleasant weather, went to meeting, as usual, all day. Mr. Brazier preached. Text same A.M. & P.M. — Mark 9th Ch., 24th verse. Aunt and Elizabeth Peirce called. Uncle, Aunt and Betsy spent part of the evening here. Read several little tracts, and think that kind of book is better than any which I know of, to excite in children a love of virtue; for here, everything is definite in colors which can hardly fail to touch the heart of the child."

"Thursday, Dec. 25th, 1823: Pleasant weather. Christmas Day. No school. Spent the day, or the principal part of it, at least, at Ive's, in setting type. Spent the morning at Aunt Ropes."

(It is interesting to note that there is little made of Christmas in the Nichols family.)

"Wednesday, Dec. 31st, 1823: . . . Thus closes the year — a year frought with events of no small consequence in the view of not only the politician, but likewise of every friend to the liberty and rights of the human race. In the space of one short year, the common course of affairs has been materially and even wonderfully interrupted, by circumstances of the astonishing magnitude. When we reflect on the late occurrencies, which have just taken place in the Eastern world; a once flourishing kingdom suddenly blotted out from the catalogue of nations; while a people has, for ages, been subjected to the tyrannical despotism of Turkish barbarians, having at length burst the chains of slavery, now exhibits to the eyes of the astonished world, a scene not unlike that which characterized the American Revolution; when we reflect on the many changes which have occurred this past year in almost every nation on the globe, not excepting even our own country; when we reflect on the havoc which time, death & sickness have occasioned in the circle of our immediate friends and acquaintances; when we reflect on the changes which have taken place even in relation to our own selves; when we reflect on all this, I say, we can scarcely credit our own senses, so great, and yet so sudden, have been the changes which one short year has exhibited to our view.

"Instability and change are truly characteristic of man, and all that pertains to man. Vain and ineffectual is the show of resistance which the strongest works of human invention can make against the all-destroying hand of time. Monuments and towers which, by their strength, have seemed to bid defiance to it, have fallen beneath its devastating attacks. Towns and cities which, once, were flourishing as our own; whose commerce, manufactures and the arts have reigned,

for ages, without a rival, where the busy hum of enterprise has resounded throughout their streets, have all fallen to decay, have all disappeared from the sight, and even from the memory of man; and that too, with such rapid succession of change, "that" (to use the words of a late elegant writer) "we can almost catch the sound of universal wasting, and hear the work of destruction going on busily around us."

"Thursday, Jan. 15th, 1824: . . . The small-pox is raging in different parts of the U. S. but particularly at Philadelphia. It is said to be of a more malignant nature, than any heretofore known, sparing not even those, who have been inoculated for the kine-pox."

"Friday, Jan. 30th, 1824: . . . My birthday — 15 years of age."

"Saturday, Jan. 31st, 1824: Cloudy and *some* snow. The *Nautilus* arrived this morning — in coming in she ran ashore back of the fort, where she stuck about ½ hour. She got off, however, without damage. Received a certificate *extraordinary* from Mr. Eames, in which he says I have 'past an examination in *my* 'last month's classical studies, without mistake'. Staid at home this P.M."

"Tuesday, Feb. 3rd, 1824: . . . Pa bought 2 loads of country wood, one of which, Pine, he bought for 5.75. There was more than 1½ cords in the load."

A report of the fatal illness of George's Uncle Joseph Peirce Nichols in Lima reached Salem in April, 1824 and is reported as follows:

"When the news of his sickness came his mother, [Sally Nichols] was quite ill and it was deemed imprudent to communicate the worst to her, which was this: that Capt. Meek said, he appeared to him in a *deep-consumption* and he had *no idea he would ever reach home.* He was about 28 years of age. His complaint was undoubtedly of the liver. He left $5000., partly belonging to himself, and partly to the Owners of the *Friendship;* besides over $100 belonging to John and me; together with other adventures, which will probably be all lost as the merchant, in whose hands it is, is a most *consummate villain.* In splitting a stick of wood this A.M. Henry cut a deep gash in the side of his foot, with which he will probably be *laid up* for some time."

George's diary continues:

"Thursday, April 22nd, 1824: . . . Commenced reading 'Portraiture of Shakerism' by Mary Dyer."

"Saturday, April 24th, 1824: . . . A statement in today's *Observer* refutes the charges brought forward against the Shakers by Mary Dyer . . . but we are still inclined to believe her statement true, as, together with an air of verity which the work bears, we are personally acquainted with those who have lived among them, and whose accounts coincide with hers, in every respect — drunkenness, particularly."

" . . . Paid 12½ cts to have my hair cut, the first time in my remembrance that it was ever cut by a barber."

"Sunday, 25, April: Took a walk with brother John and Benjamin Peirce in the pasture. We got a late bouquet of flowers, of columbine, snowdrops and violets. The season is indeed very forward. Trees are in blossom and a few currant bushes. Our asparagus is fit to cut and dandelions we had today for the first time in the season."

"Saturday, May 1st, 1824: . . . The *Observer* of today says that some signs in the moon have lately been discovered in London, which *fix it as a certainty that she is inhabited by civilized beings*. What will not folks invent, when they get their imaginations heated by any popular opinion!"

"Sunday, May 2nd, 1824: . . . Read Duties of Parents and *do* of Children, by Drs. Bancroft & Channing, — excellent sermons. Also, look over 'Christ's Second Appearing.' Some parts of it are infamous, for example:

'The father's high eternal throne
Was never fill'd by one alone:
There was Wisdom hold the Mother's seat,
And is the Father's helper meet.
This vast creation was not made
Without the fruitful Mother's aid'
Anne Lee

The foregoing makes an infamous strumpet the wife of the Almighty; the subsequent verses from the same work, are rather contradictory, and give her the appearance of being Christ's sister:

'The holy Ghost at length did bear
Th' anointed one, the second heir,
A *virgin* soul, a holy child,
A Mother pure and *undefiled*'
Anne Lee

Though we would be far from blaming any man, or any class of men for their peculiar tenets, we think of the Shaker doctrines too blasphemous to pass unnoticed . . . "

"Thursday, May 8th, 1824: . . . Among the numerous improvements about to be made in town, a new building is to be erected, for the Museum of the 'East India Marine Society.'* It will probably be very handsome."

"Wednesday, May 26th, 1824: . . . John and Myself took the stage for Boston this morning & after a pleasant ride of 1½ hrs. arrived at Uncle B. R. (Benjamin Ropes) Nichols', Cambridge St. Uncle H. (Henry) Nichols and wife were there, on a visit of one day. We had not been there long before up came the stage with Caroline Saltonstall, on a visit of a week. After stopping a short time, to refresh ourselves, we walked out with Benjamin Peirce (who is at Col. Swett's on a visit) round the State House and Common. Several of the companies were on parade, it being 'Election Day.' After which we went to several auction rooms, to get catalogues of books, to be sold tomorrow & Friday. On our return we met Uncle Benjamin at his house, who went with us to the gaol, to see a mulatto, by the name of Pery Anthony, indicted for the murder of a white man, in the Bay of Honduras, & whose counsel Uncle Ben is."

"Friday, May 28th, 1824: . . . Attended the trial of Anthony for a short time in the P. M. — the ground the counsel for the prisoner took was *Insanity*. Soon after we took our seats in the stage for Salem . . . Among our fellow-passengers was an Irishman, a curious genius, and of that stamp usually called *Originals*. There was hardly one in the stage who escaped his strictures — some he derided, others he applauded."

"Saturday, May 29th, 1824: . . . Betsy Eustis was at the house P.M. to work at mantua-making. Uncle H. Nichols sailed this evening, in the Br. *Nautilus,* for Baltimore & S. America. A notice in today's paper, with respect to Anthony, says that the Jury has brought him in — Guilty."

"Thursday, June 10th, 1824: . . . Read 'Indian Wars' this evening, for arguments in favor of the Indians. I shall endeavour to give this subject a thorough investigation, and make no statements but what can be supported by the most undeniable facts. I have long, indeed,

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*Peabody Museum of today.

Alexandria 27th Octr 1797.

My Dear Brother.

From the great duty and Obligation I consider myself under to my best of Brothers I cannot think of leavering this Country for so long a time ere I address You with a few Lines. I have at this time undertaken a Voyage to India in the Barque Vigilant belonging to Capt. Forister of Salem commanded by Dane Hathorn. which was quite unexpected to me having but 5 Days notice previous to leavering Salem which was the 28th Ult and arrived at this place in the 23 Instant after a rough Passage of 26 Days, we are now taking in a Cargo of Flour and Tobacco for the Isle of France from thence to Manilla or China but I think Manilla will be the Place. which Voyage will consume 17 or 18 months. I am going in much the same capacity I went with Capt. but rather more favorable for me excepting the Pirats troubling us which I hope may not be the

CAPT. GEORGE TO HIS BROTHER JOHN FROM ALEXANDRIA

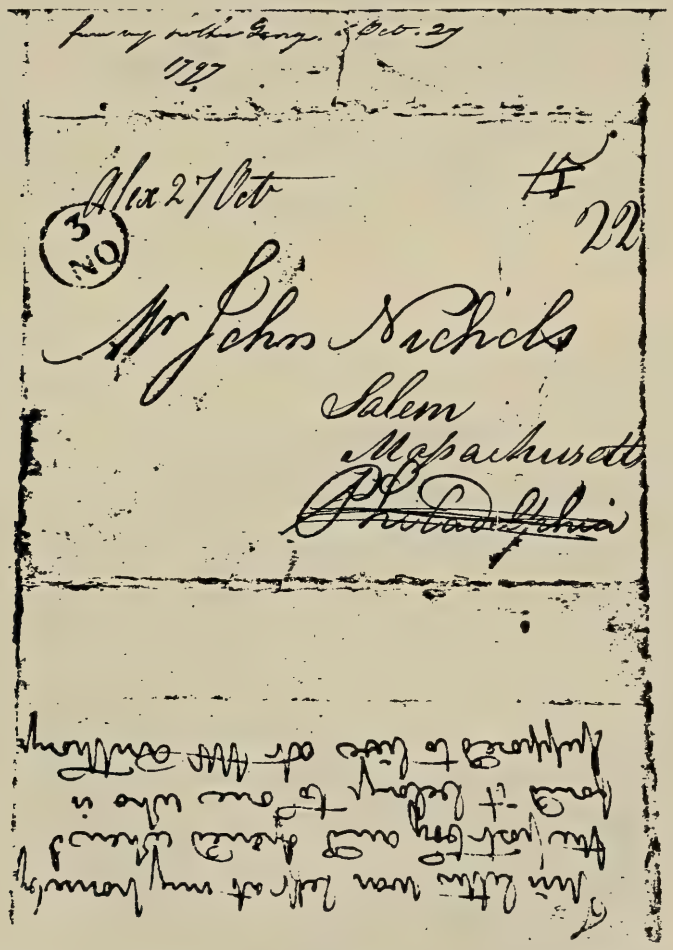
case but time alone will determine it
it gives me much anxiety my Dear Brother
that I must quit my ~~[illegible]~~ native Shore
again without seeing You ~~again~~ but trust
I shall not be deprived of a line from You
which I have not had the pleasure of for a
Great wile, but will not compute it for a van
of Inclination, but opportunity
You are now on the eve of leaveing I suppose
Mr Anthony when I trust you may meet
with some lucrative employment sufficient
to reward You for the time You have been
employd with Mr Anthony but sincerely
wish You have no thoughts of going to sea
as I can assure you any thing is preffable to it
it is realy a Dog's life in haste I must
bid You a dieu with wishing You
every blessing and happiness the
word can bestow upon You & remain
Your Affectionate Brother
George Nichols

CAPT. GEORGE TO HIS BROTHER JOHN *(continued)*

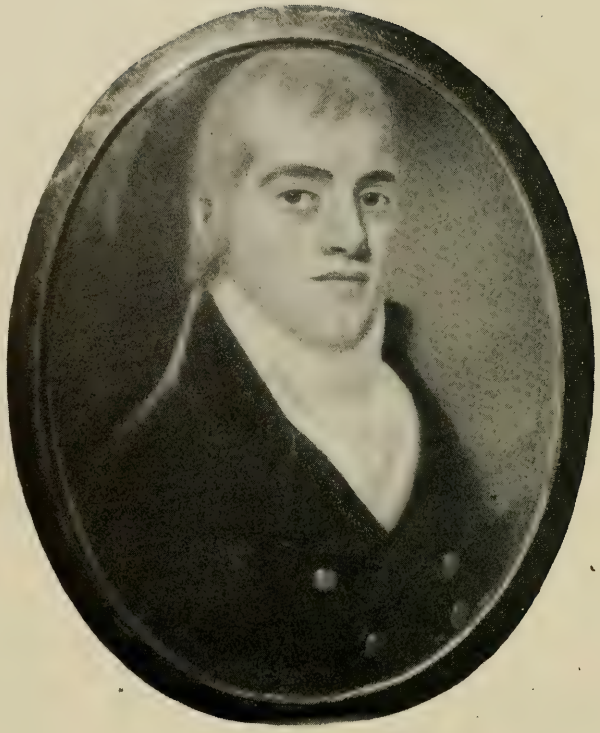
N B we shall sail in 10 or 12 Days and trust I shall not be deprivd of the happiness of a line from you which You will be pleas'd to direct to the Care of Mr James Porter of this town which I will endeavor to answer

You will excuse this Scrawl as I am in great hast

G N



CAPT. GEORGE TO HIS BROTHER JOHN *(continued—above)*
ENVELOPE TO LETTER, RETURNED UNDELIVERED *(below)*



CAPT. GEORGE (Miniature Painted for Sally, London) *(left)*, JOHN WHITE TREADWELL *(right)*

Salem December 17th 1787

Dear Cousin, I am happy that I have an Opportunity to answer your Letter which with (pleasure I receive) Inclose in my Mama's Letter. I am very sorry to hear by your Mama's Letter you & your Brother are so sick, but hope this will find you well with all Friends as they leave me and Friends well as usual. Uncle George is arrive from Sea, & is just upon Marrying. Dear Cousin I am sorry you are so mistaken as to suppose I have any advantage of you in Schools, for I go to but one School, but I hope to have more soon, as I think them the greatest privilege we can enjoy; but we will talk more of this when that wisht for happy time arrives, that I shall see you here with your dear Papa, & Mama, till when if you please we will divert ourselves by Writing each other every Opportunity, please to present my respects to my Aunt, & (& love to Cousins) permit me to subscribe myself

your Loveing Cousin

Joseph Peirce

Mr John Nichols

Joseph Peirce
Lt.
to Cousin Nichols
Dec. 17 1787

JOSEPH PEIRCE TO HIS COUSIN JOHN NICHOLS IN PORTSMOUTH

Salem April 30th 1797

Dear Brother

I now take this opportunity to write you by Mr Goodhue for it is a long time since I have received your letter but excuse me that I had not wrote you before for I have not had much time I hope you will also excuse my writing for I suppose you can scarcely read it. I should be very glad to come & see you at Philadelphia if my Parents were willing, I also hope that you will come home & see me & the family very soon. I hope Brother Geore will get home very soon to join the family. Brother Henry & Joseph Pierce are both very fond of playing. a long time ago they saw you & now they are always talking about you.

I remain your loving brother

Ben^a Nichols

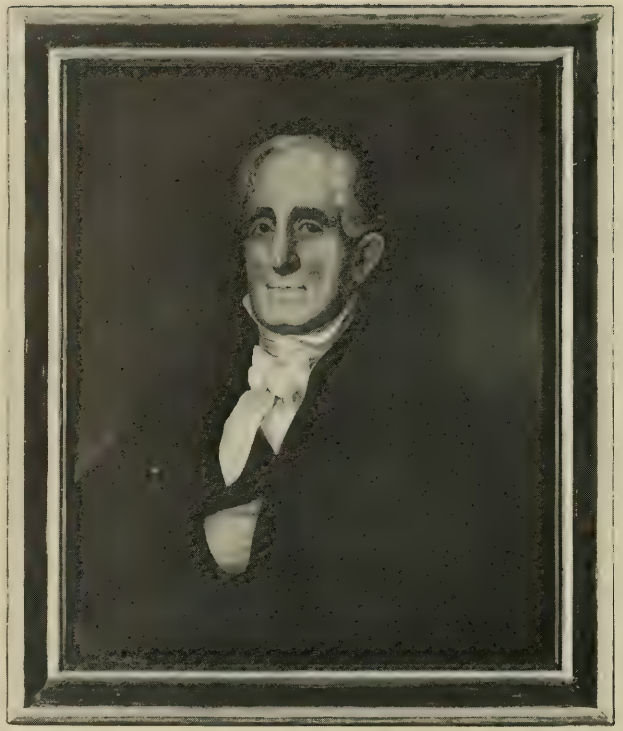
BENJAMIN NICHOLS TO OLDER BROTHER JOHN

(Courtesy, Mrs. John T. Nichols)

SILVER TANKARD WITH NICHOLS COAT OF ARMS

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

MAHOGANY ARM CHAIR, PEIRCE-NICHOLS WEDDING 1801



Capt. George Nichols, 1845, by Fink

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

Betsy Peirce Nichols, c. 1845

84TH BIRTHDAY DINNER, Capt. George Nichols, Peirce-Nichols House, 1861

SALEM GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

Nichols

RECITATIONS during week ending July 5 1823

Perfect.	Good.	Bad.	Conduct.	Attendance.
All	o	o	Perfectly Correct	11

Ay. Kimble Olive Instructor.

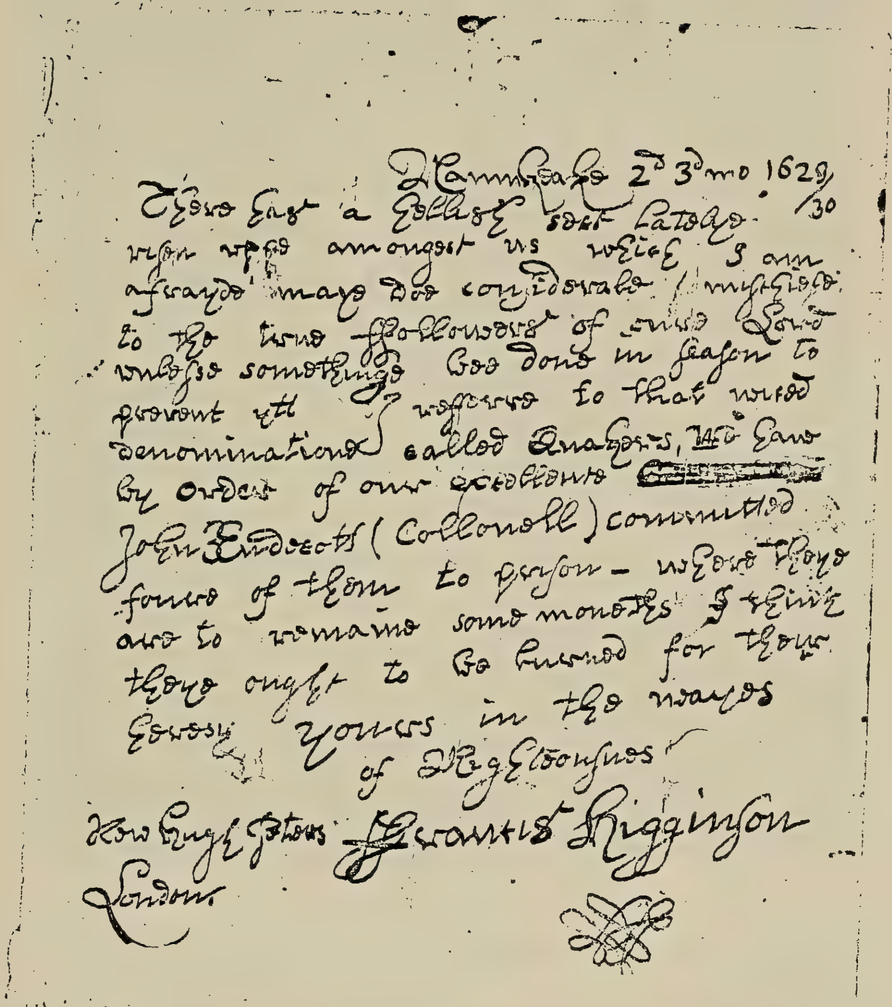
— Salem Grammar School —

G. Nichols has past an examination
last months Classical studies, without mista

Th: Eames, S

January 31. 1824

GEORGE NICHOLS, JR.—Salem Grammar School Reports

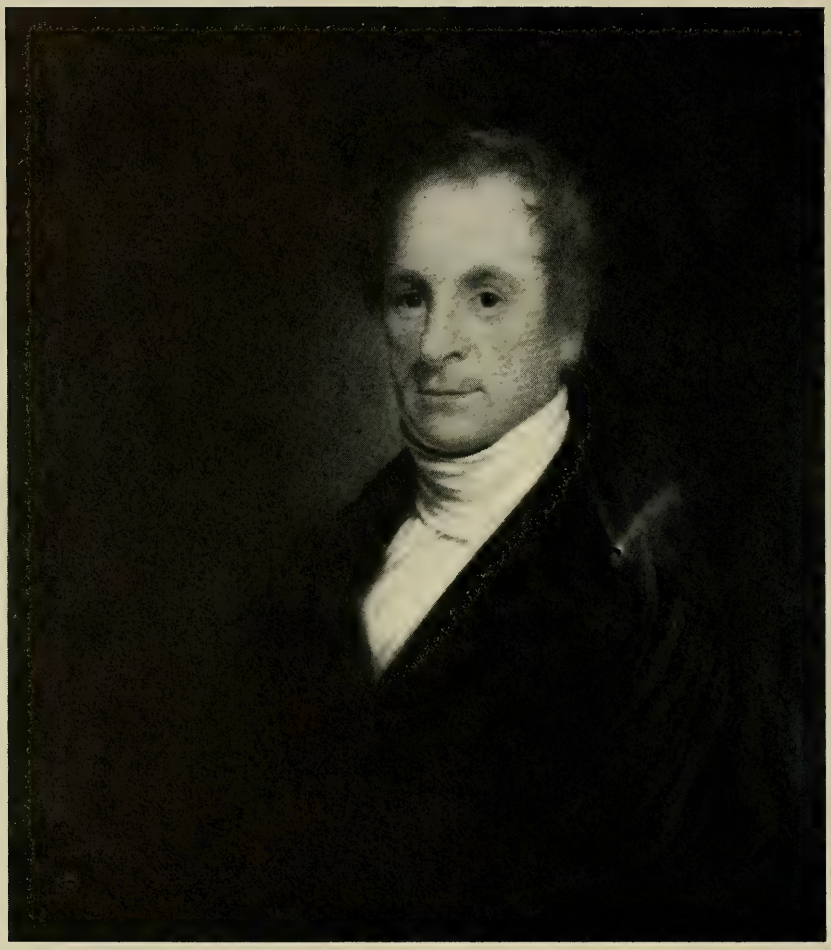


Cambridge 2d 3d mo 1629/30

There hath a hellish sect lately risen upp amongst us which I am afrayde maye bee considerable mischiefe to the true followers of our Lord unlesse somethinge bee done in season to prevent ytt. I referre to that wicked denomination called Quakers, wee have by order of our excellent [illegible] John Endecott (Collonell) committed fowre of them to prison — where they are to remaine some monethes I think they ought to be burned for their heresy. Yours in the wayes of Righteousness

New Englishtown, Francis Higginson
London.

Francis Higginson Letter—Probably a Hoax
Characteristic of John Henry Nichols, Practical Joker



(Courtesy, William Ichabod Nichols, New York)

Rev. Ichabod Nichols of Portland, Maine

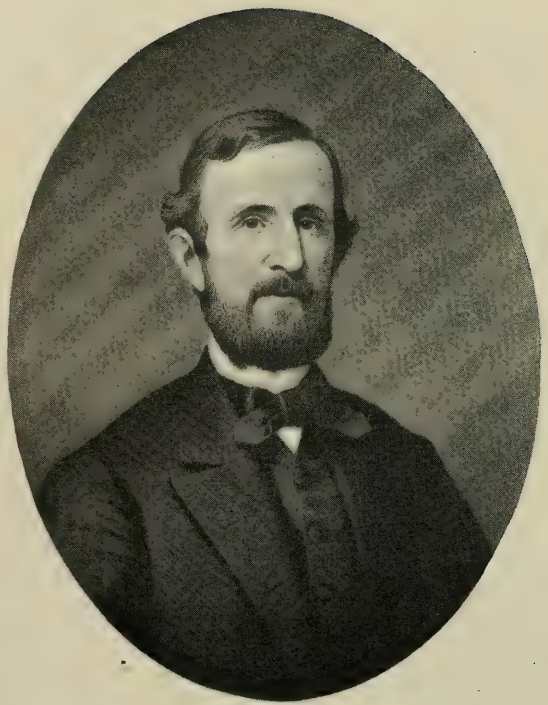
A South West View of the

FIRST PARISH MEETING-HOUSE

PORTLAND.

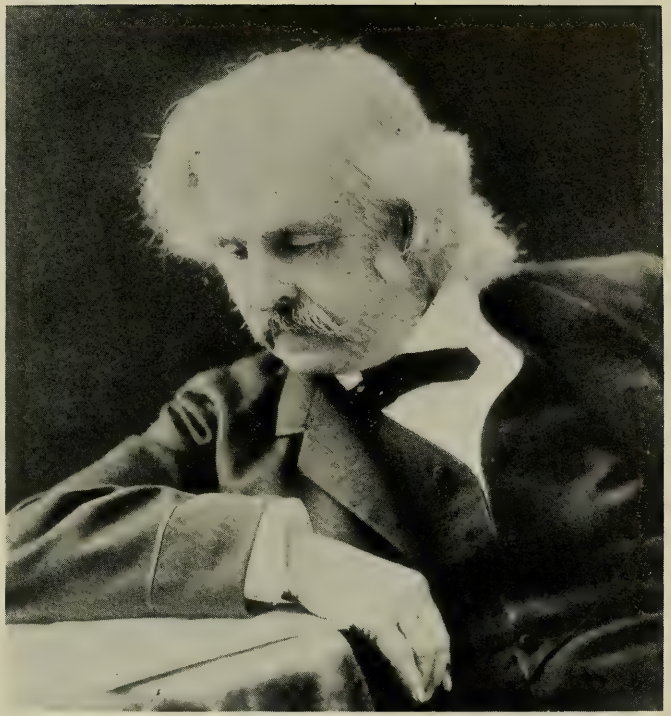
Erected July 1740, *and taken down April* 1825.

Replaced in 1825 by Rev. Ichabod Nichols



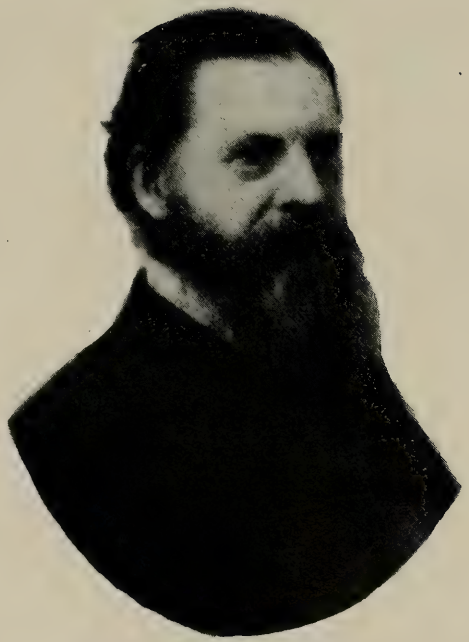
(Courtesy, Adelaide Nichols Baker, Westport, Ct.)

Rev. John T. G. Nichols of Saco, Maine



(Courtesy, J. T. G. Nichols, Boston)

Dr. George H. Nichols of Standish, Me. and Cambridge



(Courtesy, Harvard College Library)

CHARLES SANDERS PEIRCE

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Announcement of Peirce's Forthcoming Book

(Courtesy, Cambridge Historical Society)

Brattle Street Home of George and Susan Nichols, Cambridge

held opinions favourable to these 'sons of the forest', & I find many, of distinguished talents, have been of the same mind, that the Indians have been grossly injured."

"Friday, June 11th, 1824: . . . The early History of N. E. (New England) by Gov Winthrop & I believe in his handwriting, has been found in the 'Old South Church' in Boston. The early history of our country has been hitherto imperfect, but this MS supplies the deficiency. It is to be printed."

"Tuesday, June 15th, 1824: . . . Went to the Athenaeum after school and obtained a copy of the new regulations; one of which is, 'No member of Proprietors' families, under the age of 16 years, shall be permitted to visit the Athenaeum' except 'while the librarian is attending to deliver books, unless attended by a Proprietor.' This appears to me to be a very arbitrary rule; as if boys do not know how to take care of themselves until they are *16 years* of age! I guess that rule won't prevent *me* from *visiting* it at any hour I please; though I am not 16. Annexed to the Regulations is a list of fifteen books, which have been taken from the Athenaeum at different times, within a year; there have been also, several valuable works essentially injured, &c &c. which the 'proprietors' lay to the charge of *boys*. Now *I* don't believe that the *boys* ever touched of one of those books which are so much injured; and I should not be at all surprised, if those very persons, who were most in favor of that law, were *themselves* the offenders. Spent the evening at Aunt Peirce's."

"Friday, June 18th, 1824: . . . We had great news from the *Herald*. It appears, she was lying at Callao (which is the port of Lima) at the time the Royalists took Lima, when, with other vessels, she was hauled up under the guns of the Castle, to prevent her escaping. The Patriots, in revenge for the loss of their City, sent in a fire ship to destroy the shipping in the Port, which burnt a number of vessels lying around the H. Free from Scylla she was in less danger of being ruined by Charybdis, that is, being ordered to another port for trial, she would have probably been condemned together with the cargo, had not Captain Williams bribed the officer who came to carry her thither, with $2000. to let him escape. He set sail immediately for Guyaquil, whence this letter was dated, so that we expect the vessel home next month. The *Nautilus* has also arrived at Baltimore." (This gives some idea of the times of the sailing ships as well as the constant danger the traders were in in foreign ports.)

"Wednesday, June 23rd, 1824: . . . My Indian cause comes on finely — I find new evidence in support of it almost every day; while, on the contrary, Babbidge, who has taken the other side of the question, remarked that he could not find scarcely anything in defence of his subject . . . went to see the hall where the Freemasons will dine tomorrow. It is fitted up very handsomely, with oak leaves formed into emblems, &c. Several paintings grace the chamber, among which is a full length portrait of John the Baptist, drawn by Mr. G. Foster of this town, as I understand." (Note double negative "could not find scarcely anything". Mention of Babbidge are letters from him to George Nichols. He was a friend of school days.)

"Thursday, June 24th, 1824: . . . No school this P. M. Being dismissed at 10 o'clock I went to the Common, where a large concourse of people was assembled, to see the procession of Freemasons, which . . . proceeded to the 'Old North' in grand style, with all their trappings, jewels, etc." So engrossed with the oration of a Freemason did he become that "On returning I was forced to ge to bed on account of fatigue, and on rising my right leg was so lame that it was with the greatest difficulty I could walk. I expect it arose from a contraction of the cord, having stood on that foot a great deal."

"Friday, June 25th, 1824: . . . In a 'sun-shower' this P.M. I witnessed a very remarkable phenomenon, which was nothing more nor less than a *rainbow on the ground;* or, rather, about four feet from the ground; and one as beautiful as I ever saw in the clouds; it lasted but about a minute. Ma and Elizabeth also saw it. Elizabeth, who first remarked it, said she could distinctly see drops of rain falling into it, and that it was much more beautiful when it first appeared, than when we (Ma & I) saw it. Lest anyone should consider it a delusion, or a mock rainbow, we can safely affirm that no rainbow was visible in the clouds at that time, nor until some time . . . afterwards. The cause of it was probably the height of the sun, — it being then about 4 o'clock." (Note that George, unlike some adolescents of today, gives his sister Elizabeth the credit for the first and best observation of the phenomenon. It is quite an indication of his character; and although he may at times appear humourless, perhaps it is his style of writing. Actually there is more of interest and colour in this diary of a fifteen year old boy than in all the other diaries.)

"Monday, June 28th, 1824: . . . went to Briggs' ship-yard, to see a brig belonging to Capt. Jos. Peabody, launched. She appeared to be

almost completely rigged — with masts, &c. It was a most beautiful launch; I think I never saw one handsomer, if so handsome. It is, indeed, a most majestic sight, *to see a vessel take possession of its native element* — how proudly it dashes over the ways, spurning, as it were, stocks, land, everything! as it hurries on to meet the placid ocean, which with open bosom receives it with seeming acclamations, as it flings the water to right and left. It is indeed impossible to give an adequate description of this noble sight; but it is one which is so common that nothing is thought of it beyond the hour, and nothing said, more than some commonplace expression . . . " (Note: "Jos. Peabody", "Joseph", or the famous "Captain Josiah Peabody?" Description of the launching most beautiful, colourful & thoughtful!)

"Thursday, July 1st, 1824: . . . Pa has commenced taking the *Boston Patriot,* an Adams paper. It announces the death of Lord Byron, the most eminent poet of the age. He died at Missolonghi on the 19th of April last, of a severe cold, aged only 37 years . . . 'Funeral solemnities were performed in all the churches, in honour of a man who, by his benevolence and benificence, together with his zeal for the liberty of Greece, has justly endeared himself to all who are in any way connected with that nation, and who are interested in its welfare. The Greeks have procured his heart, for the purpose of depositing it in a Mausoleum.' Although the religious character of Ld. Byron was deservedly the subject of much censure during his life-time, although by several of his works he drew upon himself the imputation of *Infidel,* still great allowances are to be made in extenuation of this fault, by reason of the manner in which he was brought up, — wholly without restraint. He was undoubtedly a good-hearted man, and one whose loss, as I said before, will be severely felt. I hope some able hand will pen his life and character, & that, too, shortly. The memoirs of his life by himself in MS were burnt, after his death, by reason of some scruples on the part of his family as to the propriety of having them published . . . " (Is it possible this boy is only fifteen!)

"Tuesday, June 29th, 1824: . . . The opponents of Mr. Colman, together with Mr. C. himself and his friends, met at E. Coffee-House this evening. The object of the Anti-Colmanites was to keep Mr. C. away fr. this town, even now. Many warm words passed between the parties, to the discomfiture of the 'Opposition'; indeed, it is useless for them to struggle any longer, for the more disturbance they make, the more ground the Colmanites gain."

But the letter of religious advice which George received from his father some years later is also indicative and significant; he appears to have regarded Mr. Colman as a friend, and he would not be drawn into any religious controversies in which this minister, too liberal for the Orthodox, became involved. He writes to his son:

"Dear George, I am very sorry to find that you are so deeply interested in the business of Mr. Colman and settlement in this row. Of all controversies I consider that of religion is the worst mankind was ever engaged in. Therefore as you regard your own comfort and happiness, and that of your own Family and Friends, I must request that you may always be upon your guard as to your words and actions in all situations you may be placed in, for you may be assured that there is many of Mr. Colman's enemies who will not fail to irritate and provoke you to act and say that which perhaps is not proven . . . "

The Journal continues:

"Thursday, July 1st, 1824: . . . Dr. Prince's Society have had another meeting for the purpose of *inviting Mr. Colman to become their pastor!* . . . The Colmanites are pleased with the issue."

"Friday, July 2nd, 1824: . . . Aunt Peirce came to the house this evening, on purpose, I expect, to weaken Pa's confidence in Mr. Colman."

"Sunday, July 4th, 1824: . . . Pa's birthday, 46 years. Forty-eight years have now elapsed since the day on which the Genius of Liberty first spread her banners to the gaze of astonished America, and bid her take her station among the nations of the earth. Time has unfolded nearly half a century since that 'auspicious morn' on which assembled America gave to the world that declaration which at once established an era never to be forgotten in the history of the U.S. This country, now so flourishing, may, indeed, sink to the very lowest depths of degradation and barbarism, tyrants and despots *may* hold dominion here, and even curse every section of the earth by their presence, and unite with the destroying hand of time, to root out every trace of days past and gone, to overturn every movement of liberty throughout the world, and even to kill, burn & destroy, to put men to death by the severest tortures, that may root out every remembrance of past liberty; still, it is impossible that some faint recollection of this glorious day should not be cherished in the mind of man till time is no more."

"Saturday, July 31st, 1824: After school two birds flew into our house and catching them I found them to be a species entirely unknown to me. The colour of the feathers was light green tinged slightly with gold, wings very delicate, bills very long (about ½ inch) and black. After examining them sufficiently I dismissed the little captives. Some said they were yellow jays. Sally was pleased with them and would have them in her hand."

"Thursday, Aug. 5th, 1824: There appears to be what the Orthodox call an *awakening,* or *revival of religion* in this town and vicinity, among the young. If what is meant by an *awakening,* be a consciousness of one's own demerits, and an humble, but sincere determination to follow after righteousness, far, very far be it from me to reprove or condemn it, but such, I fear, is generally not the case."

"Friday, Aug. 6th, 1824: . . . Called at Grandpa Peirce's (Jerathmiel) for Lydia this evening. By a letter that Grandpa Nichols (Ichabod) has received from Lima, it appears that Uncle J.P.N. (Joseph P. Nichols) died in that city on the 28th of October last, having been more or less unwell ever since his first arrival. Mention is made of the manner of his death, — that he appeared resigned and in the full possession of his faculties, his last words being 'O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!' He was interred in a small island (San Lorenzo) about 9 miles from Callao, that being his wish. He was abroad 3 or 4 days previous to his death, attending to his concerns as usual."

"Monday, Aug. 9th, 1824: . . . The *Herald* arrived, 116 days from Guyaquil. When at Callao (the port of Lima) she was engaged in quite a serious difficulty, the particulars of which, when I obtain them, I will endeavor to give. Cousin T. (Timothy) Ropes is the supercargo of the H. and was engaged in every point of the affair fr. beginning to end."

"Saturday, August 21st, 1824 . . . At school the boys were examined in the English branches. P.M. the exhibition in speaking took place, which generally was very good, and numerously attended by spectators. After the performances were over, Judge Storey, Chairman of the School com. mounted the stage and delivered us a very handsome address, praising us for our improvement, but at the same time endeavoring to impress upon our minds the necessity for unwearied perseverance in our studies . . . to the 1st class, composed of Fields,

Babbidge and myself, he gave a beautiful edition of 'Lucanus' in 2 vols., elegantly bound in calf . . ."

"Tuesday, Aug. 24th, 1824: . . . I have, on consideration of all the arguments *pro* & *con,* concluded to present myself for admission to Cambridge the present year. Spent most of the day at home, in studying, painting, &c. In the evening took a walk with Lydia to Aunt Betsy's, and on my return accompanied Aunt Sally home. Gen. Lafayette reached Boston this A.M.; his reception there is said to have been very splendid, much more so, indeed, than at N. York. A town meeting was held this A.M. for the purpose of appointing deputies to invite him to visit this town. A committee of 12 was chosen, at the head of whom is Hon. Judge Story. They have presented the invitation, but no answer has, as yet, been given."

"Wednesday, Aug. 25th, 1824: . . . Gen. Lafayette has returned for answer that, owing to numerous engagements, he will not be able to visit this town . . . "

"Thursday, Aug. 26th, 1824: . . . This morning, early, took a seat in the carriage . . . and after a rather unpleasant ride of two hours or more . . . we arrived at Cambridge . . . went in search of B. Peirce . . . made the best of our way to the meeting-house and soon succeeded in obtaining a pretty good seat in the gallery. . . at ½ past 12 had the satisfaction of hearing the shouts which announced the arrival of La Fayette, He has a fine, noble-looking countenance, and although he walks rather lame, his whole appearance exactly coincides with the idea one would form when reading his history. His dress, so far from being decked out with finery, is, on the contrary, very plain, destitute even of the usual badges. And although honored with the grateful homage of 10,000,000 of freemen, yet he seems not at all vain, but bears about with him the truest mark of a noble mind."

"Saturday, Aug. 28th, 1824: . . . I bo't 'Rules for Latin pronunciation' and Webster's 'Speech for the Greeks' before leaving town and bidding adieu to Cambridge for the present, we walked over to Boston. After dinner took passage in the stage, and arrived at good 'old' Salem at about ¼ past 4. I here learn that Lafayette on Thursday last accepted the invitation to pay Salem a visit, and that he is expected *to dine* here on Tuesday next."

"Tuesday, Aug. 31st, 1824:. . . At an early hour the cavalcade in honour of Lafayette was formed . . . about 12 the cannon . . . announced his approach, and shortly after we had the pleasure of seeing

him descend the high ground near the bridge into Central St., where, notwithstanding the rain was pouring in torrents, he was greeted by an immense crowd, the largest indeed I have ever witnessed, and *so* large that it was with the utmost difficulty the carriage could force a passage. The general rode in an open carriage drawn by white horses, having his head uncovered, being sheltered from the rain by an umbrella held by Judge Story, and likewise by a cloak which was thrown over him. Besides the escort already mentioned he was likewise attended by several companies of infantry under the command of Capt. Cloutman — a large body of sailors dressed in blue jackets and white pantaloons with blue Lafayette ribbons round their hats — and a large number of citizens in carriages. The bells now commenced ringing, which, together with the shouting of the people, the roaring of cannon and the fine band of music, had a most admirable effect. Having, under the escort above mentioned, passed through many of the principal streets, and having reviewed the children of the several schools, who were arranged in two lines on the Common, he alighted at the Essex C. House (to be known, hereafter, by the name of the Lafayette Coffee House) where he was addressed very handsomely by Judge Story, to which he replied *ex tempore*. After a short tarry at this C.H. he was escorted to the Hamilton Hall in Chestnut St., where he partook of an elegant dinner, in company with Mr. Salazar, the Colombian minister, and his secretary — Gen. Dearborn & son — Cols. Lee & Pickering — his own suite, & about 300 citizens.

"The Hall was most beautifully decorated by the ladies of this town and, to use the words of one of them, 'everything appeared like enchantment; and although I assisted in dressing it, yet the sight was so magnificent that my senses were bewildered.' It was observed that Fayette feasted more on the sight than on any of the dainties which were set before him, as his eyes were continually wandering about the room. It was the remark of Gen. Dearborn, than whom no one has had better opportunity of seeing the European feasts 'that this exceeded anything of the kind he ever witnessed.' Indeed, all coincided in bestowing the most ample praise, as well on the cooking of Remond, as on the taste and skill of Salem ladies. Among the toasts was one by Judge Story which, I may venture to say, has been exceeded by none: 'Gen. La Fayette — he obtains without price what Monarchs cannot purchase — *the gratitude of a free people.*' At half past 5 the General took leave, and, I think, not unaccompanied by the good wishes of

every inhabitant of Salem — one heart, I know, regretted his departure; and one heart, I know too, will ever feel an affection for this, 'the bravest, the wisest and the best of men.' He was escorted by a company of cavalry which accompanied him fr. Marblehead, although the rain continued to descend in torrents. All the streets through which he passed in this town were handsomely decorated with flags, arches, inscriptions, &c, particularly Central St., which was the first he entered."

This description is closed with the final sentence that "Pa took dinner at the Hall", so it can be assumed that George, Sr. was one of those citizens of Salem so honoured as to be invited to dine on this all important occasion.

The Journal continues:

"Wednesday, Sept. 1st: — Clear and cloudy, alternately, with a little rain. In the morning went to see the Hall, where Fayette dined yesterday. Although the tables were stripped of most of their ornaments, yet the remains of great elegance were to be seen. Other things remained as yesterday, and the sight was indeed beautiful. The room was hung round with flowers, natural & artificial, as well as with oak leaves, and arranged very tastefully. The windows were hung with yellow curtains, bordered with oak leaves. Pictures of all sorts adorned the hall, but that which struck me most was an engraving from Trumbull's celebrated picture of the declaration of independence. It was placed at the back of Washington's chair, in which Fayette sat yesterday. A blue arch, bearing the name of the U.S. Presidents, occupied a recess at the head of the table, and like the other decorations was encircled with oak leaves. But what pleased me most was the chandelier — so beautiful in itself, and so still more elegantly decorated. If I might judge from what I saw this A.M. I should think there was reason for the unqualified praise bestowed upon this most magnificent scene — indeed, I could have past hours in looking on its ruins without wearying. For the sake of gratifying an idle ambition I seated myself, on leaving the Hall, in Washington's chair, and which was an honour, I thought, which many would envy me. Spent pt. of the A.M. at Mr. Cushing's, and the P.M. likewise. Commenced binding a volume of advertisements &c. Took tea and spent the evening at Grandpa Nichols."

"Thursday, Sept. 2nd, 1824: . . . No less than 10 or 12 pockets were picked on Tuesday in this town — several suspicious persons have been taken up in consequence. I attended the trial of one of them for a short time this P.M. Nothing satisfactory could be proved against him, though I believe him to have been concerned in these robberies, he being a professional gambler, and being proved to have travelled about under rather suspicious circumstances. About 11 o'clock this A.M. the bells commenced ringing, and a report that 'La Fayette was coming' spread through the town like lightning. Everyone left his business and Essex St. in a few minutes was thronged with people, everyone eagerly inquiring where he was but no one being able to tell. After remaining in this state for about ½ an hour it at length turned out to be a hoax! Fayette having reached Boston, on his return from Portsmouth, at half past 7 this A.M. — Henry's birthday — 8 yrs. of age."

In the late summer of 1824 George Jr., having passed the examinations most successfully, decided to go to Cambridge. A little letter was slipped into his hand by his mother, Sarah Peirce Nichols, on the eve of his leaving home for a college career at Harvard. His mother's message is written on two slips of paper in his own handwriting:

"Paper slipped into my hand by my dear mother as bade her Goodbye on starting for College, September, 1824.

'Have the fear of God constantly before your eyes.

'Discharge your duty faithfully to Him.

'And may you be preserved from every temptation is the most earnest prayer of your mother.

S. Nichols
to G. Nichols"

George's diary continues with his move to Cambridge:

"Friday, September 24th Salem — Pleasant. This morning took my leave of home and, in company with Pa, took the Boston stage, where we arrived about 9 o'clock. Immediately went to Dabney's place of residence, but not finding him, went to Uncle B. R. N. 's, where I staid for a short time to rest myself. Dabney & myself then walked over to Cambridge together, but it being his intention to remain in Boston 'til tomorrow, I was left alone till Pa arrived. After dinner proceeded to remove my furniture to my room, 26M. but the arrival

of the stage soon obliged Pa to leave me. My feelings were rather riotous, but sensible to the weakness of indulging in sensations of grief, I ere long overcame them. But I soon felt the want of a protector, for the rascal who removed my furniture villainously cheated me of 20 to 30 cts, because, I suppose, he saw my comparatively helpless condition. The circumstances were these:

"On leaving me, Pa gave me 72 cts to pay the man, being the price agreed upon. I offered it to him — he refused it — I reminded him of the agreement — he disowned it, and added, 'Unless you pay me the usual price, $1, I will take your table as my due until the debt is discharged.' I then deliberately told him that I believed him a vile cheat. This, too, he pretended to spurn and, with much confidence, expressed his 'contempt of such meanness.' I then refused to pay him any more than what had been previously agreed upon. At this time he grew quite furious; and forthwith proceeded to execute his threat. I resisted, he wrenched the table from me, and with such an apparent sense of the imagined injury intended him, that I began to waver, and doubted whether I might not be mistaken; the more, too, as the Negro who was putting up my bed, informed me that $1.00 was the general price. This plausible argument, joined to my desire to be rid of the fellow, induced me, in the tremor of the moment, to comply with his demand, and send him about his business. On cool reflection, however, I cannot but entertain strong suspicions of unjust extortion, and feel myself obliged to set the fellow down as a villain, in the vilest sense of the term. Having performed several of the necessary prescriptions, I went to Porter's, to supper, and receiving an invitation to pass the night with Field, since my room was not in order, I afterwards went there, when an agreeable night's sleep soon shut out the remembrance of the sorrows and anxieties of the day."

"Saturday, 25th — Pleasant. Attended prayers in the Chapel for the first time; and likewise took my meals in Commons. Having waited on the President with a receipt fr. the Steward, he made me sign my name to I don't know what, then gave me a copy of a letter — circular, respecting the expenses in college, together with a list of books to be used. The Laws are undergoing a revisal, therefore a copy of them was withheld. My room being cleaned I commenced arranging my furniture, but it was not till afternoon, when Dabney arrived, that we were completely settled. Towards the last part of the P.M. we received a visit from Mr. Colman."

"Thursday, Sept. 30th, 1824: . . . With regard to the college hours I find that we are called up every morning at 6 o'clock or before, at the sound of the bell, when we are obliged to attend at the chapel . . . after which we return to our rooms (that is, those of us who have no recitations) and at the breakfast bell which rings at 7½ o'clock, we return to University Hall. At 8 or 9 we recite in Latin or Greek half of the class in the former one week; and in the latter the next, the other half in like manner. At 10 or 10½ in Geometry, at 12½ dinner, 4 or 4½ in Lat. or Greek. At 5 attend in the chapel; immediately after we have supper. The study hrs. are 8 to 12, 2 to 5, 9 to no matter what hour. Indeed, I am obliged to devote the whole time to study . . . so that there is not the least difference between study or play hours, with *me.*"

"Wednesday, Oct. 6th, 1824: . . . It is really a subject worthy of observation, how much the sentiments of a person with respect to the self-same thing differ at different times. For instance, a few days ago I felt myself as good as my neighbors, but a few inaccuracies in some of the recitations of today have almost disheartened me and have even . . . caused me to consider myself as bad a scholar as any.

"O Gracious God, grant that I may not disappoint the expectations of my friends!"

"Saturday, Jan. 15th, 1825: . . . Spent the A.M. at home . . . Have just finished 'Edgeworths Patronage' . . . Its characters are, in general, remarkably well drawn . . . so naturally drawn, votaries of fashion, of dissipation, of 'pleasure', the coward & the cheat, the brave and the handsome man, domestic happiness & the harassing cares of public life — all these . . . are presented in such a point of view that . . . this work can but do good & leave some favourable impressions when one rises from its perusal. The only fault . . . in Miss Edgeworth, is that *she does not write often enough.*"

(Note: this is only one of many such critiques throughout this journal; it is a mere embryonic example, yet indicative of his talent which he later developed as proof reader and editor for Longfellow.)

"Thursday, March 3rd, 1825: . . . A petition presented by our class requesting permission to illuminate our rooms tomorrow evening, on account of the inauguration of J. Q. Adams as President of the U.S. was rejected."

Soon after young George had been established at Cambridge his father wrote happily:

"It affords me great pleasure to learn that you find your situation at Cambridge pleasant, and particularly of your determination to obtain an honorable rank there; although you fear you may not succeed as you know your duties arduous and increasing. I would observe my Dear Son that you must never suffer yourself to despond under any circumstances, with the principles with which you are blest, if preserved, you cannot fail of success . . . If any opportunity presents, I will undertake to visit you again before Thanksgiving.

"You will receive by the bearer the Lamp required. I have since conversed with Mr. Colman who observed that he had known instances of persons being injured by having a very bright light reflected from these Lamps. I would therefore caution you to be on your guard that this does not injure your eyes.

" . . . I have no doubt you will be careful to avoid the company of the low and worthless — that you will consider you are in Cambridge only for the purpose of getting an education, and above all that you are there to establish a character which every virtuous and good man will approve.

"I am sorry that I was obliged to leave you in your confused state, but hope you will not over-exert yourself to get sick. If your bed is not in order. You had better sleep and plan to get your meals there until you can get them in Commons.

"Mr. Colman has promised to visit you, and will offer such advice as he may think useful. He will be a valuable friend to you.

"Your truly affectionate parent,
George Nichols

"P. S. Get a good night's sleep and you will feel more comfortable tomorrow with the first opportunity."

Letters from Capt. George to his son, George, Jr. at Harvard show a remarkable devotion between the two. The father pours forth his thoughts and reveals his own character, and George reciprocates in his own far-less frequent, but most affectionate replies. In his letters to other family members George speaks of his father with an almost adoring affection, as telling of a meeting or visit with him: "I am ever most happy if I may but see him!"

Capt. George's very great interest and concern for the success of his son's career at Harvard — his accompanying him there and installing him with such solicitude, his constant concern for his studies, his faith in his honors to be achieved, his cautions and advice in the matter of his health, and his longing for his "home visits" — may all be seen as partially due to the comparative hardships in the father's own youth. Going to sea at the age of sixteen, learning the rough life and the hardship of the sea-faring life early, the natural deprivation of the life he had chosen in place of any college education, and above all perhaps, the painful and long separations from the home which he loved — all this may have inspired his more tender and feelingful concern for the youth of his son.

Young George was installed by his father at Harvard in the fall of 1824 and for the first year or two, his father's attention was given to a detailed following and interest of the college organization and requirements, and his son's part in them:

"I am truly sorry to learn of a renewal of the disturbances in the Freshman Class — and am glad to hear that the Govt. has taken up the business in earnest. I must earnestly entreat that you keep clear of any scraps which I have no doubt you are determined in. I hope B. P. (Benjamin Peirce) does not take a hand in the present commotion; if he does, don't fail to use all the means in your power to draw him off."

Father George's advice and admonition to George, Jr. are very much like in tone to the advice given him and his brother John by their father, Ichabod, on their setting out from home:

"I would again Repeat, my dear Son, that I hope (I have no doubt) you will continue to improve the great advantages your present situation affords . . . Remember you are there for Education. Yet, exercise and relaxation are important . . . Never be despondent. You have the capacity to achieve success. Do not despair if others are passing you. On the other hand, do not relax if you are passing others. I think a visit to Salem would be advantageous if agreeable to the Govt. that you come down on Friday or Saturday, and pass Sunday with us."

The week-end which father George so hoped his son would pass with him, his birthday week-end of July 4th, was destined to be a disappointment. For on July 5, 1825 he wrote to George Jr.: "I wrote

you yesterday . . . Surprised my letter was not received. I think a journey would have been of service to you — I hope you passed your time pleasantly yesterday." As "yesterday" was the all important family birthday, the devoted father sustained a little extra prick of hurt in that he evidently did not hear from his son, nor have the hoped-for joy of seeing him on his own important day. But George's efforts to have home visits from George, Jr. could not always be thwarted, and on November 14th he wrote again:

"I was sorry to learn that your studies required you to sit up until twelve every night . . . Being apprehensive that your health is not sufficiently restored to enable you to endure the fatigue of your arduous studies without some relaxation during the term, I would recommend that you get permission to return home 2 or 3 days. I think unless your health is good, you had best not walk home at the vacation."

At the beginning of the new year 1826 father George was still occupied with the health problem of his children; he wrote to his son George to look after and report on the condition of the eldest child, Sally's health, confined as she was in a nursing home in Cambridge: "I was much pleased to hear of the rapid improvement of Sally's health, (and the letter refers to enclosures for Sally of certain practical articles) and for son George "enclosed is $3.00 which I presume will suffice but let me know . . . if not you will inform me . . . "

Father George appears throughout to be apprehensive; perhaps it is logical to attribute this trait of Nichols men to the long sea-faring line where a man must watch the sea and its moods continually changing, continually bringing success or failure. It seems that his apprehension was extreme in the case of his especially close son, George, in whom he undoubtedly recognized a certain frailty most foreign to himself in his own rugged youth.

If father George was apprehensive for the health of his scholarly son, he was also most proud of his scholarship. On January 7, 1826, at the start of George's second college year, he wrote to him:

"It afforded me great pleasure to know of the Honor conferred upon you by the Government, and I have the consolation in believing that your future course will be as correct as it has hitherto been."

When in 1826 father George failed as a late but certain result of the disastrous War of 1812, and the restrictions on all American commerce, he went bravely into the grocery, insurance and auctioneering business at home, he wrote to his son at Harvard:

"Salem Sept 10 1826

"Dear George

Your letter of the 8th was handed me by Uncle Peirce and note its contents. In regard to my new business I can only observe that not having my store yet in order I can hardly be said to have commenced business but from present appearances I am led to believe that my most sanguine expectations will be fully realized. It is truly gratifying to know of the deep interest which all classes of people take in my concern & many of the most intelligent men here have expressed to me their full belief that I will ere long have as much business as I may want. Having been long used to disappointments I will endeavor to guard against having my expectations too highly raised in this business but will spare no pains to insure success. I must observe that my mind is already more tranquil than it has been for many years & my health daily improves and I begin to feel that what appeared to me (a few weeks ago) as a great calamity will prove a real blessing. Indeed I am more convinced every day of my life that those who endeavor to perform their duty will receive all necessary aid & that no *real* misfortune will be permitted to befal them. With such feelings we cannot hesitate as to the course we are to pursue in prosperity & in adversity. But no one will deny but that the ways of Providence do often appear at first dark & misterious, mine has appeared to be one of these cases. Although I have never permitted myself to repine or for a moment doubted but that my children would be greatly benefited by it; but could hardly expect that so great a change in my health and feelings would in so short a time take place. Indeed I feel able and willing to perform duties which until within a few weeks would appear almost impossible for me to do. My children may (to a superficial observer) appear to have suffered by my change of circumstances a great calamity but to a reflecting mind it will appear otherwise, they are now called on to make exertions (which would not have been the case had success attended my business) & to insure success they are led to feel that they must merit it & by doing which they will secure the confidence & esteem of those who know them & what is infinitely

more valuable, an approving conscience which no change can deprive them of. My most earnest prayer is that my children may walk in the paths of virtue, that they may be real blessings to their parents & wether they be successful in accumulating worldly riches is of little importance and they will have other riches in comparison of which money is nothing.

"I was pleased to learn of the unexpected pecuniary aid you received from the college as it may relieve your mind from solicitude & enable you to devote a necessary portion of your time to exercise & relaxation from study which I fear has not been the case since you returned to Cambridge. I must again repeat the necessity of your attention to the preservation of your health; to have it impaired would be truly calamitous. I hope you will persevere in your resolution to abstain from smoking on act. of your health. In regard to returning any part of the money you brot from home I shall consider it under any circumstances as yours & although I would recommend economy would guard you against depriving yourself of necessary food which if you dont get in commons should be made up in keeping a supply in your own room. I hope you will have an opportunity of communicating some pleasant information from Sally soon. John will soon send your cigars by Unkle Peirce & I will add a few of our Pairs if he can take them. I think the prospect of your Grandfather Peirce remaining undisturbed is now very promising as the attacks on his judgment are all removed except Cap. Perkins' who it is generally thought will not trouble him. There has been no more failures of late & I hope there will be no more although I much fear it.

"Your mother & the Family unite with me in best wishes for your happiness.

"Yours affectionately
Geo Nichols

"P.S. I am to make my first exhibition as an Auctioneer on Thursday in selling the Brig *Ontario* & will probably be succeeded by others shortly."

Unhappily father George Nichols' prophecy — "I think the prospect of your Grandfather Peirce remaining undisturbed is now very promising" — was too optimistic. Not only the business failure was a terrific blow to the proud and sensitive self-made Jerathmiel, but the

selling of his beautiful house on Federal Street, which certainly symbolized to him his climb to eminence and success, was too much for his serene acceptance, and the old man died two months after the sale of his house was arranged.

George Nichols was able to accept his adverse fortune with more than equinimity, with a certain renewed vigor and effort looking to the future. On June 29, 1827, he wrote with extraordinary courage to his son at Harvard "... As the sale of the family furniture is to commence immediately after breakfast, I must close with best regards."

Certainly George's faith in the stamina of his children under this new adversity was amply justified. Very shortly following on the announcement of his failure he was able to write to young George at college: "I was pleased to know of the unexpected pecuniary aid you received from the College, as it may relieve your mind from solicitude, and cause you to devote a necessary portion of your time to exercise and relaxation."

Young George himself was evidently inspired to a new inner security and pride in being able to contribute in some measure to the family expenses. But at a somewhat later period when George finds that he unexpectedly needs some financial aid nonetheless from his father, he writes of this with great hesitation and delicacy in a letter home. He concludes, however, that if it is any embarrassment to his father to send him these few dollars, he will himself go to the President and explain his own need.

Throughout the period of this failure George's letters to his father are remarkable in their comprehension and obviously designed by the son to keep up the courage of his stricken parent. Not only does he voice his own admiration, but reports the continued regard for his father among the friends in Salem.

That George's wife, Sally, was also a constant strength to her husband in this period of shock and adversity we may well surmise. A letter of affection and advice to her daughter, Elizabeth, who it was decided should go to live with her uncle Ichabod in Portland, Maine, follows in part:

"My dear Child: I deem it my duty to lay before you such advice as of course to me is particularly worthy of your consideration ... Next to Heavenly Father you are to look up to your uncle and aunt for counsel and advice, you will be careful never to miss attending family

prayers morning and evening with the seriousness which that important duty demands. You will read daily and command to memory the books which your brother George gave you . . .

" . . . You must not let the great change in your father's circumstances give you pain, for so long as he retains consciousness that he has not intentionally done wrong, he will suffer no inconvenience from the change only from the fear that myself and his children may be rendered unhappy by it. I shall therefore suffer no change of circumstances to give me pain, but do all in my power to make your father happy, and I hope and trust you and all his children will follow my example in that respect. . . . I again say be a good girl, and that the best of Heaven's blessing may ever attend you . . .

"Your truly affectionate
M."

We quote further from a few of the many family letters from Salem as written to George Nichols, Jr. while at Harvard:

"Salem, May 1825

"Dear Brother,

I will now continue my letter, which I began two or three months ago. I suppose that you remember my beginning the story of Uncle Peirce's going into the water with a chaise, the water was much deeper than he expected and the horse went suddenly up to his neck: had it not been for the stump of a tree which prevented the chaise from going in likewise, all would have been drowned. Uncle was obliged to hold up the horse's head to prevent him from being drowned, while Aunt went a mile or two to get some assistance, the chaise did not receive much injury. Sally is gaining strength slowly; she sat up at one time three hours and she also has spoken several times. There has been a new match since Lydia wrote. Pickering Dodge to Anne Colman; her father called to see us yesterday afternoon and informed us that you dined with him on Sunday. John says that you need not be so worried on his account, for he got home safe and sound, and I hope that you will arrive in Salem as little fatigued as he was.

"Your affectionate sister,
Elizabeth P. Nichols"

"Salem, October 20, 1825

"Dear Brother,

I am happy to inform you that Mother has recovered from her

sickness, and Henry is a great deal better than he was . . . he is able to eat cake and a little broth, but he can sit up only while his bed is making because his back is very weak. Nurse is going away today; she is a very pleasant woman, and Sally loves her very much; indeed she loves everybody that treats her kindly. She has gained strength since the cool weather came on. Charles is in jacket and trousers (Charles Nichols, born 1816). You must come home soon and see how pretty he looks. Mother says she shall depend upon your coming home to Thanksgiving. Sally says if you are a bad boy, not to let her have your watch, . . . goodbye George and do write to me soon as ever you can.

"Your affectionate sister,
Mary Jane Nichols"

"Salem, June 2, 1825

"Dear Brother,

I was very much pleased with the letter you sent me and I hope you will soon inform me by another one what books you wish me to read. Uncle and Aunt Saunders have just returned from a pleasant journey: they went to Portland first and then to the White Hills. Uncle and Aunt Nichols were well, and expect soon to make us a long visit. Mr. and Mrs. Colman spent part of Friday evening with us. Mister C. has now gone a long journey and expects to be absent four Sabbaths. Aunt Sally has raised blood again and returned to Grandmother's but is now with her sister and is on the decline. Uncle Ropes arrived in Salem night before last. Cousin William Ropes is going to employ him. Miss Gay has lately opened a school and she has five scholars. Sally is about the same, she was very much pleased with her letter, but frequently speaks of going into the country, although you advised her not to.

"Yours affectionately,
E. P. Nichols"

A letter from his sister Lydia indicates that she is "growing up":

"Dear George,

Having had my knife sharpened, I now resume my letter. As it is a rather dull time for news, I fear I shan't have much to relate. I believe I have only been to two parties, since your last vacation; which were at Mrs. John Derby's and Mrs. Joseph White's; at both of which, I enjoyed myself very much. Mrs. White had three large rooms, which were all quite crowded. Harriet White played on the piano, and sung; and Mr. Colman sung with her. There was an Adams ball on the

fourth of March. Pa subscribed but would not be prevailed on to go: giving the same excuse as usual, that he had not his dress prepared. There have been several new engagements this spring. Martha Mansfield to John Endicott, Mary Dodge to George Jenks, and I believe Hannah Robinson to Stephen Webb. Ma bought you four pair of white stockings, and wishes you to send home the coarsest white pair, and the small shirt which you wore on to Cambridge if it is convenient for Dr. Treadwell to bring them. Fearing I may not have another opportunity this term to send my letter, I will close it.

"Yours affectionately,

L. R. Nichols

"P.S. I should like to have you get me a small sensitive plant as well as a Japan rose. If there are different kinds of sensitive plants, please to get the handsomest.

"N.B. Do not think Mrs. White is afraid of Joseph; because they stand at such a distance; for it is not intentional."

George, Jr. compliments his father highly in the following letter:

"I was much pleased to see by Tuesday's *Gazette* a testimonial of the public sense of your integrity, for I will say it, in nominating you to the office of County Treasurer, not that I think you will obtain it, for your being put up so late in the day, and you never having been much before the public in an official capacity must, of course, take away all hopes of this. But still, I say I was highly gratified to find that Salem people appreciate your character in the manner they do. I was always convinced from the first that you would find your reward in something more than in the inward satisfaction of having done your duty; and you now have it in a manner which to my mind is infinitely more valuable than wealth. As respects your future prospects. I can only say God bless them! And so God will bless them, as he has already begun to do, in giving you a name and a character with the public, I must beg of you to forgive this feeling in me; but really I can not restrain myself when I think upon you, be it when it may.

" . . . It would be a great convenience to me if you would send me $20 of the money which Mr. Phillips lent me, as my bill is much larger than I at all anticipated, owing to the increased rate of tuition . . . However, I don't know but that I may have taken up all that

money on my last quarter bill, if so, pray send me any from your own pocket; I will settle with the President as I can.

"Yours affectionately
George Nichols"

George's daughter Lydia shows in her cheerful acceptance of the situation that her father's faith in his children is justified;

"Salem, June 10, 1828

"Dear Sister:

We live very pleasantly in the house with Dr. Peirson, which you know is very near Grandmother and that adds, not a little to the pleasantness of the situation. Indeed I think we are as happy as we have been at any period. All we want now is a good long visit from you, then I think we shall be quite contented. We were very happy to see Uncle and John, their visit was short but sweet. Father is going to have a famous sale of Mr. Watkins things of which John will give you a particular account. Mother is well, she is the tailoress, Aunt Betsy is the knitter, Sarah the cook, I am the guider though they all give me the credit of not guiding as much as I used to. George is to be a minister, John an auctioneer, Mary Jane a little of everything, Henry and Charles gardners. Uncle H. Peirce remains in Charlestown, as overseer at the hospital; He was well the last time we heard from him. We are all well excepting Uncle H. Nichols, who has a very bad cold. I must close now with my best love to Aunt Nichols and yourself.

"Your affectionate sister,
L. R. N."

In 1828, just a decade before Ichabod's death, his grandson George, Jr. graduated from Harvard, followed a year later by another grandson, Benjamin Peirce, Jr. (son of his daughter Lydia). Both graduated with highest honors and were destined to distinguished intellectual careers.

George Nichols, Jr., mystical and religious by nature, as well as particularly sensitive and of a keen intellect, was beseiged by doubts. His grandfather, Ichabod, the pillar of religion and tradition, was a feebling old man. The era of the Salem merchant princes of his own family fortune had ended. The diminution of the family fortune had contributed grave anxieties to his college career. He graduated to stand at the crushing, devastating end of an era, and at the unknown begin-

ning of a new era. No wonder he doubted, unsustained by the confident, sure, almost physical faith of his grandfather Ichabod.

On graduation from college George appears to have grasped firmly and desperately at the straw of his salvation; he would become a minister of the liberal Unitarian Faith. He studied single-mindedly and was duly ordained. He preached as substitute Minister at a number of parishes in the Boston and Portsmouth areas, and occupied the pulpit of a small country church in Pennsylvania, where he held also the position of tutor in the family of a Mr. Huidekuper, one of the well-to-do parishioners. During this period of his ministry George wrote most thoughtful and detailed sermons and tracts, apparently for his own guidance and search for truth, as well as for the instruction of his congregation. But he was not happy, and he was not well, presumably because the doctrine of Unitarianism was not yet sufficiently liberal for his entirely unfettered spirit. "Very many are deserting religion in these days," he comments in one of his letters, "that is because people regard religion as Dogma. Whereas religion is the Soul's true happiness."

Fortunately for young George's health and happiness, he had the abiding love of young Susan Treadwell in Salem. Susan, gay, carefree, naturally gregarious and outgoing, taking even her religion happily and as a matter of course, so long as she attended the Episcopal service in St. Peter's Church each Sunday, was George's best balance wheel.

Now young George was not tempted to enter the field of merchandising. There was no longer fortune to be won in seafaring, as for his father and grandfather before him. After trials of teaching, or preaching, of holding two small parishes in the Unitarian Ministry for short, rather unhappy periods, he settled finally and successfully in the literary circles of Harvard and Cambridge to a free lance career as "critic" and editor to the great, and to periodic work in the Harvard College Library.

We quote again from his Journal during the years following his graduation from College:

"Thursday, June 10th, 1830: . . . In the evening, G. Putnam, E. H. Edes & myself being in my room smoking, I asked Putnam whether he would be willing to accept a challenge . . . to give up smoking forever. He hesitated for some minutes at last said *he wd make me a challenge to renounce it* . . . I forthwith drew up a paper in these words: —

"Cambridge, June 10, 1830
Divinity Hall, no. 35

" 'We, the undersigned, so severally bind ourselves, as men of truth & as Christians, that we will, neither of us, *ever* allow ourselves in the use of *Tobacco* in any shape whatever, from and after the fourth of July next.

" 'Provided, nevertheless, we may use it whenever, & so long & to the extent that, our regularly prescribing physicians shall order it as a medicine.' and so ye agreement was ratified. And I thank God that it is so — for I have been too long a slave to ye use of this vilest of all weeds."

"Sunday, June 27th, 1830: . . . After I had retired last night I lay reflecting on the odiousness of the habit of smoking, & the injury which I believed it was causing me — I therefore, resolved not to wait until the 4th of July but to break off immediately . . . When I was quite a boy . . . I used occasionally to get one of my father's cigars & light it in the kitchen, & then go with my brother John behind the cellar-door & enjoy it . . . I resolved to abstain from smoking . . . I very soon, however, became addicted to chewing tobacco . . . and . . . I had now the two habits of *smoking* & *chewing* tobacco fastened upon me . . . And now, God grant me strength to resist every temptation to return again to either of these habits which I have this day renounced.

"Monday, June 28th, 1830: . . . Received at last a letter from Susan — for which I have been most impatiently looking these two or three days past . . . Have been exceedingly dull & stupid all day — on account to my abstinence from cigars . . . "

"Friday, July 16th, 1830: . . . Spent chief of ye day & evening with Susan. After dinner she discovered for the first time, that I had left off the use of tobacco — & to see how delighted she was . . . seemed to me more than a counter balance for the privations I have been . . . suffering . . . but I can hardly regret when I find that it occasions so much happiness to Susan to feel that she has been instrumental in reclaiming me . . . Dear girl, I would do anything for you — & should feel it a pleasure too — however great the sacrifice, if it wd only gratify you . . . "

"Tuesday, Sept. 21st, 1830: . . . P.M. over to Boston where I procured a horse & gig — & taking Susan with me, we rode over to Brookline, through Cambridge, & passed the afternoon at Dr. Peirce's. Soon after tea we set out on our return, & taking the road by Jamaica Pond,

arrived in Boston about 7 o'clock, after one of the most delightful excursions I ever made, — & but for one most unfortunate occurrence shd have recollected our ride with feelings of unmixed pleasure. We had reached home, & Susan was stepping out of the chaise, while I sat holding the horse who I was afraid might be frightened by ye sawing & splitting of some wood in front of the house. For this reason I suffered her to get out alone — when her clothes were caught in the step & she was precipitated to the ground with such violence as nearly stunned her. She crawled from under ye wheel, however, without assistance & very fortunately without disturbing ye horse. Seeing that I could then get out without endangering her, I immediately sprung to her, & supported her into the house. Her chin was severely cut — otherwise, thanks to a good Providence, she was not injured, — except that she was thoroughly jarred through her whole system . . . "

On Tuesday, Oct. 19th, 1830, when George was absent from home on a mission at a country church, he wrote:

"Received a letter from Susan today, which I read over and over, so delightful did it seem to hear from her. Indeed, I have been long of opinion that, however contrary it may be to the experiences of others in my circumstances, I am every day getting *more & deeply in love;* & I am sure I cannot regret it, so long as there is so solid a foundation for it to rest upon as there is in her estimableness . . . "

"Sunday, Nov. 22nd, 1830: . . . Preached with more confidence than I have usually been able to command in my public services . . . The people seemed quite attentive, & I felt encouraged to let out my heart rather more than usual. I am conscious, however, that I have got a good deal to do to learn to preach with all the effect which may be profitable to the hearers. I begin, too, to be dissatisfied with my sermons — they are not sufficiently evangelical. I must write some new ones before I can preach with full satisfaction to myself . . . "

"Sunday, Jan. 30th, 1831: . . . My birthday — being now twenty two. On looking back on the past years, how much do I see in my character & conduct to regret! God give me grace, that that on which I have now entered may carry up to heaven a more satisfactory register of my life!"

"Tuesday, April 5th, 1831: . . . In the evening waited upon Susan to a party at N. Silsbee's Jr. — the first I have attended in Salem for several years, six perhaps, and the last I ever desire to attend — for

of all the nonsensical frivolities I ever witnessed such parties present the greatest & most disgusting. Everybody seems to be at pains to act & talk as ridiculously as possible. Certainly it would seem almost a libel on human nature to call the manners and conversation which are commonly current in such company those of rational beings. *Apish* would be a much more appropriate name. And worse than all, with many of the ladies (& this, it is said, is all *a la mode)* it seemed to be an object to dress as immodestly as possible. Exposure of a person appears to be the chief thing — & she who succeeded best in overcoming the modesty of nature seemed to regard herself as entitled to the greatest share of attention, & the praise of the highest beauty. Really, I do fear that such a mode of dress must proceed from something worse than vanity. I do fear that nothing less than laxity of morals could ever have so far subdued the natural delicacy of the female mind. I desire to be thankful, however, that *all* are not so wanting to their native character . . . "

In July of 1831 George accepted a call to a small parish church in Meadville, Pa. and gives an interesting account of his journey:

"Monday, July 25th, 1831: . . . Rose at 4, after a not very quiet night — having been able to get only two or three hours' rest, & part of that on the floor, on account of the bed-bugs, heat & noise. At ½ past 5 took the stage for Providence, where we arrived about 12, having had a very delightful ride . . . Immediately on arriving in Providence took passage on the steamboat President for New York — represented to be the finest boat on the line. Here I met with the lady of Brother Arnold, going on to her husband in Pittsburgh, Pa., with her two children, little boys of one & three years old. Learning that it was her intention to take this journey I had previously written to her, offering to escort her as far as Meadville; an offer which she had accepted so that now I find myself charged with some considerable care, besides the looking out for myself. However, Mrs. A. appears to be a very interesting woman, so that I have no reason to repent my undertaking.

"At 1 the boat was under weigh (Note how our modern expression "under way" comes from this), & soon carried us out of view of the town . . . I observed nothing, however, which interested me particularly until we arrived at Newport, quite a considerable town, & from the circumstances of its being the scene of one of Cooper's novels,

calculated to excite interest . . . About 5 o'clock we got out into the open sea, off Point Judith, that fearful test of a landsman's stomach & head. For myself I sustained the trial tolerably well . . . & kept my station on deck; but the motion of the boat at length sent me staggering & retching to the gunwale — & finally compelled me to seek refuge in the cabin, where I lay for about an hour, extended at full length on my back, on a settee; & then retired to my berth, where I remained for a couple of hours more, after which I returned to the deck, quite myself again, the boat having now arrived in the Sound, where the waters are smooth, the motion of the boat, of course, had ceased. After sitting for an hour or two leaning over the gunwale, looking at the moon & musing on the scenes I have left, home, & one than whom even home is not more dear — committing them all to God, I retired."

"Tuesday, July 26th, 1831: . . . About ½ past 5 commenced a most sublime thunder-storm . . . The storm ceased, however, in time to afford us a view of the entrance of New York & a most delightful sight it certainly was & from the perfect forest of masts which were present to the eye betokening a most flourishing business, a most animating one, too . . . On nearing the wharf, observed it lined with coachmen, truckmen, porters &c, all bawling out most lustily to be employed: 'Want a hack?', 'Want a cab?', 'Want a pair of trucks?' Having been previously admonished to be on my guard against these fellows, as being a thieving race, I engaged a good stout Irishman . . . to take charge of my baggage, and by his assistance I very soon saw it deposited on a hack, in which I took seats with Mrs. Arnold and her children . . . After dinner spent a couple of hours in rambling about the streets, looking at what was to be seen & what was that? Why, nothing. N. York is an immense place, but I see nothing like remarkable beauty in it. To a business man, a merchant, it probably presents greater attractions than our good city of Boston, — but I very much doubt whether, to a mere *gentleman-traveller,* it would not (sic) yield in interest to Boston. The park what is it? Why 'tis a fool to the Boston Common & as to their public buildings, I do not see one which will stand a comparison with the Trinity Church in Summer St.

"After breakfast attempted to go out, but had proceeded only a few steps when I was driven back by the rain. Having now the prospect of a little leisure, sat down & wrote a letter to Susan. About 10 the weather cleared up & afforded me the opportunity of walking out to

view the city. Called on Rev. Mr. Ware & Mr. Lunt. Mr. Ware was polite but reserved — & a good deal of a *city* man: i.e., formal, cold, nothing cordial. Mr. Lunt, on the contrary, though I had never been introduced to him before, was much the reverse, much more pleasant — probably because, having been a resident in N. York but two or three years he had not had the opportunity to contract so much of the N. York manners."

"Wednesday, July 27th, 1831: . . . took passage on board the steamboat to Albany. My protegee Mrs. Arnold was not with me, — having concluded to remain till the evening . . . I had often heard of the glories of the Hudson, but the *reality*, no one can understand . . . every bend of the river presents a new view . . . my mind was in a constant rapture . . . & could I have friends to enjoy it with me, I felt that I could hardly desire anything better in the way of relaxation than to sail up & down this noble river. And this want I did feel sensible. As on the passage from Providence to N. York, so here, I found almost everybody linked in with some party, & turning the most forbidding face on all attempts at conversation on the part of those with whom they were not acquainted."

"Thursday, July 28th, 1831: Rose about 5 & walked down to the wharf to receive Mrs. Arnold. Much to my surprise and not a little to my consternation, she was not to be found. She had arrived in the boat at about 5 o'clock, as I learnt, — but no one knew where she had gone. Fearing that she might have been induced to go on board one of the canal-boats, I immediately set off in quest of her, having previously been informed by a messenger whom I had dispatched for that purpose that she was at neither of the principal hotels. In this pursuit I spent an hour, to no purpose except to satisfy myself that she was not on board any of the canal-boats. It was now nearly 7 o'clock . . . at 8 the stage in which I had engaged a seat, was to start for Schenectady. In this dilemma I determined to go and inquire at some hotels where I knew my messenger had not been — & to my delight I at length found her . . . Having incautiously or rather ignorantly, suffered the roll to be called of those who wished for beds while I was engaged in conversation . . . above-board, I found myself, owing to the large no. of passengers, in danger of being obliged to sit up all night, or else to sleep on deck, — neither of which pleased me much, — the latter particularly; since, besides that the night was very chilly & damp, the lowness of the bridges under which we were constantly passing, seemed

to render it somewhat perilous . . . but all would not do, so mustering up courage I again betook myself to the cabin, where after considerable difficulty, succeeded in . . . procuring a place on the floor, barely sufficient to admit my body edgewise, — & at length with much ado & no little qualmishness (sic) of stomach, happily fell asleep."

"Friday, July 29th, 1831: . . . Utica is a beautiful place in its external appearances . . . The society, however, . . .is not altogether so agreeable as one could desire, the manners of the people being very reserved and unsocial— owing, doubtless, to the great number of adventurers who are constantly flocking into the place.

"At 2, again embarked on the canal with my little charge . . . for the purpose of visiting Trenton Falls. The course this afternoon was dreadfully dull . . . Besides all this the captain and all his crew were almost downright churls, so that it was in vain to hope to relieve the tedium by conversing with them. . . . Very fortunately for myself, however, I had taken the precaution to provide myself with . . . the Northern Traveller & the Diary of a Physician, with which I succeeded tolerably well in keeping the blue devils away . . . "

"Sunday, July 31st, 1831: . . . Having agreed to meet Mrs. Arnold in Rochester today, was obliged, though much against my conscience, to proceed on my journey this morning . . . After dinner Captain Boardman called, & told me that Mrs. Arnold had proceeded on her journey in the boat to Buffalo. Felt a good deal disturbed to learn this because having paid away a considerable sum on Mrs. A's account I found myself in danger of being delayed for want of funds to defray my expenses . . . I concluded to proceed early in the morning to Buffalo by stage — hoping to overtake Mrs. A. before she should leave that place — & having, indeed, a reasonable prospest of being able to do so, on account of the greater rapidity of this mode of travelling . . . "

"Monday, Aug. 1st, 1831: . . . After tea, walked down to the canal coffee house where, much to my joy, I found Mrs. Arnold."

"Tuesday, Aug. 3rd, 1831: . . . Rose about ½ past 5 & called on Mrs. Arnold. After breakfast took the stage for Niagra Falls . . . we crossed over into Canada in a horse-boat . . . I got out upon Table Rock with all diligence, where I stood and feasted my eyes . . . till I was called away to prepare for dinner . . . Very fortunately the sun, which

was in the morning clouded, was now unobscured, furnishing us with a view of the magnificent rainbow at the foot of Table Rock. Much to my regret, was obliged to return to Buffalo without passing to the American side of the Falls — & the more so because I found that had I gone up on that side in the first place, I might have enjoyed both views in the same time that I spent looking at one."

"Wednesday, Aug. 3rd, 1831: . . . After breakfast took passage in the steamboat for Erie . . . I was sensible, nearly all day, of something of that disagreeable feeling which usually precedes sea-sickness . . . We were met by Mr. Huidekoper & his second son (Edjen) & his daughter (Anna) . . . & Mrs. Arnold, much to my joy & relief, found her husband."

"Sunday, Aug. 7th, 1831: Preached to my new congregation this morning. Our place of meeting is the Courthouse — our society being yet quite small & unable to incur the expenses of building a church."
"Monday, Nov. 14th, 1831: — The press of duties has obliged me to neglect my diary for the past two or three months . . . The first Sunday in each month I have administered the Lord's Supper to the Church in this village, besides once to the congregation in Vernon. I have baptized twelve individuals — a little daughter of Mr. Courtney's (which was my first), a dying infant daughter of Mr. Clement's, also a dying infant daughter of Mr. Fowler's, four of Mr. Cullum's family, Catherine & Malvina, (young ladies) and Arthur & Clinton, Mrs. Clements and her three sons, and a daughter of Mr. Beach's. I have attended two funerals . . . The first month which I spent here passed off quite pleasantly. The second month my health and spirits began gradually to decline under the pressure of labour — not of the labour generally, I think, but only of that composition — the constant necessity for which keeping my mind constantly on the rack, exhausted me & affected my health. the third month suffered very much from a succession of heavy colds which reduced me still more. At present I find myself wholly worn out both in mind & body."
"Sunday, Dec. 18th, 1831: . . . After mature reflection and reconsideration, I have determined to pursue my original purpose of writing my father respecting my situation and views. This morning I accordingly penned another letter, which I carried to the Post Office — so that my mind is at length settled."

"Saturday, Jan. 7th, 1832: . . . Received letters this morning from my dear father & mother & Susan. My father urges me to return home as soon as I can — as does Susan also, in a post-script to my father's letter; but in another, dated the following day, he strongly dissuades me. In my letter to my father I had myself proposed this — but having since already concluded that it would not be necessary, as I find my health improving, I shall of course acquiesce in Susan's advice . . . "
"Friday, July 20th, 1832: . . . Finished my school this afternoon, & with a feeling of regret which I certainly never anticipated. Oh, I cannot bear to think that the time of my departure is so near at hand — for notwithstanding what I have suffered here, I do love Meadville & the people, particularly my own people & Mr. H's family — & I am sure I never can be more delightfully situated, so far as the possession of the hearts of the people is concerned . . . "
"Monday, July 23rd, 1832: Generally pleasant. Rose about 7. Engaged during the day in making farewell calls, packing up, &c. Retired . . . "

George's Journal ends here.

The period from 1829 until the Civil War may well be termed the "Period of Transition" for the family as for this country. For the family this was as expected from the shipping failures in 1827, a time of poverty, but also of hard constructive pioneering work.

George Jr.'s younger brother John entered business of various kinds, often connected with accountings in the mercantile and shipping field. In this occupation he showed noteworthy business ability. At the outbreak of the Civil War both his business experience and his naturally philanthropic spirit directed the removal of himself and his family to New York and his own entry into the work of Public War Service with the Sanitary Commission in Washington. In the year 1860 we find him living with his wife and four daughters — all but the youngest "young ladies" of the period — in a fashionable section of downtown New York.

George, Jr. and Susan were married in 1834, six years after George's graduation from Harvard, and most of his doubt and unhappiness seemed to have vanished. He decided to leave the ministry — the

composition of tracts and sermons which Susan finds in her own "Reminiscences" had ever been distasteful to him — and to enter instead the field of literary criticism and editing. He took up with his young wife residence in Cambridge, the best location for these activities.

Here in Cambridge George in later years was adviser to the literary great. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow lived as a Harvard Professor but a few blocks away, and there was Nathaniel Hawthorne of this new world of literature which was to be born; in this George, the best and most desired editor, was to have his part.

George Nichols Jr.'s "Magnum Opus" would probably be considered his editing in five large volumes the *Life and Letters of Charles Sumner*. But his personal letters and correspondence with noted writers and publishers of his day afford by far the more spritely and interesting reading.* The large and unusual collection of letters written to and from George Nichols, Jr. in the course of his literary career in Cambridge, where he was proof reader** to Longfellow, Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes and many another most eminent in this literary field, in itself records much of the literary life and the development of New England of this important period. Several of these letters are quoted here:

To: George Nichols — Riverdale

"30 Jany 1860

"My dear Sir

I try to thank you for your note. (sic) I have heard nothing further from Mr. Lowell. I think it possible that he may return by train from Portland today even if he should be obliged to go back tomorrow.

"Meanwhile I think there can be no serious objection to letting the

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*George Nichols' literary correspondence is at the Houghton Library, Harvard University, as a loan from George Nichols (1878-1950).
**A proof-reader in these years was also an editor and sometimes a publisher as well, so there are letters to George Nichols from Oliver Wendell Holmes and others of the "literary great," giving him permission to alter their lines in any way which his own literary judgment dictated.

work on the Maga. go in regular course without his revision. I shall gladly do what little I can to supply his place.

"Very truly yours,
C. E. Norton
(Charles Eliot)

"Should I hear by mail from Mr. Lowell I will let you know at once. Have you all the copy that is needed for the March number? I can write a literary notice or two if they should be required."

The following letter shows recognition of his literary standing as far away as New York:

"Office of the Merchants Magazine
New York, March 1st 1848

"George Nichols Esq.
"Dear Sir

I notice that you have published, a second series of Lowells poems; a writer whose productions have a high place in my affections. My object in writing is to say that I shall be pleased to notice, that or any of the beautiful works that emanate from your establishment. My Magazine has a large circulation, among a wealthy and influential class (of) persons, who from the fact that they are better able, probably buy more books than any other. The Harpers of this city, Appleton & Co, Wiley & Putnam, Corey & Hunt, Lea & Blanchard, Little & Brown, Lincoln & Edwards and indeed most of the publishers send me all their works for notice and doubtless find this accurate in it.

"Should you be of the same mind, why send me Lowells poems 2d series, and I will endeavor to do them justice, or any other books you have or may hereafter publish. Send them through Guys Express or in parcels which you are no doubt occasionally sending to the Appleton or Wiley & Putnam.

"I herewith send you the March number of the Merchants Magazine, where you will find that I have occupied the last eight pages with the Book Trade, containing notices of 56 new works or new editions of old works.

"Yours truly

FREEMAN HUNT
Ed. M. Manager"

The following letter attests to the meticulous exactitude in the use and meaning of words of the "proof-reader-editor" George Nichols:

"My dear Sir,

I do not know the word 'tholsil' — but you could probably find the origin of it in some History of Dublin, if there be one. 'Thole' used to be employed by our older poets for '*dome*' and there may be a hint in that. I return the papers with many thanks. In writing the notice, I did as you bid me and effaced you (as the French say) as much as I could. I will try to find 'tholsil.'

"Yours very truly,
J. R. Lowell"

This letter somewhat formal for a brother to write shows that George Nichols had at his disposal the somewhat larger resources of the important Boston publishing houses.* It also hints that there may have been a recent "pirated" edition of Macaulays History so common at this time:

"March 5, 1849

"To Mr. George Nichols,
Cambridge

"Dear George

We have been very strongly urged by Dr. Putnam to undertake the publication of a correct edition of Macaulays Hist. one that would do justice to the press. We have not the means of doing it ourselves but thought you might undertake it. It might be printed so says Mr. Brown for about 665 cents a volume and every literary man in the country would wait for it.

"If you are disposed to think well of the project please drop me a line.

"Yrs truly
H. Nichols"

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*George Nichols had also purchased with Charles Mitchell and Owen Keith in 1842, the University Press. This Press, having a semi-official connection with Harvard University, is still in existence as a commercial firm and is the lineal descendant of the earliest College Press — printers of the *Bay Psalm Book,* the first book printed in English in the Colonies.

A Committee of the Reverend Ichabod Nichols' First Unitarian Church of Portland had been charged with the posthumous publication of his book *Hours with the Evangelists,* and wrote this letter to George Nichols, Jr:

Portland, Mar. 12, 1860

". . . Your own reputation as an Editor would of itself have impelled us to designate you as the proper person to discharge this most delicate and difficult task; but when we know also that the author has freely communicated his views in regard to the work for you, we cannot think of allowing any one else to act in this regard.

"Yet at the same time we beg to say, we are but few who assume to pay the expense of a revision which to you, as to us, seems necessary in order to a proper presentation of the work of your Uncle; and allow us to hope that your charge will be regulated somewhat by these facts, and that the work will be put to press at as early a day as is consistent with its importance.

"Very truly yours
Wm. Willis
John T. Gilman Committee
Edward H. Daveis
John W. Dana"

The following was written by George Nichols of Cambridge or at least written in his hand:

"*The Authorship of* Jane Eyre *and* Wuthering Heights"

"The admirers of *Jane Eyre* have been greatly shocked, within a few days, by the perusal of a book recently issued by the Messrs. Harper & Brothers, entitled *Wuthering Heights,* and purporting to be by the author of the former work. Is it credible that two works so totally unlike, having not a single characteristic in common, should yet have been the offspring of one and the same brain? 'Doth a fountain send forth at the same time sweet water and bitter?' We have not seen any copy of the English edition of *Wuthering Heights,* and do not know whether the announcement, 'By the author of *Jane Eyre,* which appears on the title-page of the American reprint, was taken from the original publication, or whether it is merely an addition of the American publishers. With the former supposition we are utterly at a loss to reconcile the fact, that in all the English notices we have seen of

these two works, and of another entitled *Agnes Grey* they are spoken of as the separate productions of those brothers — *Jane Eyre* by Currer Bell, *Wuthering Heights* by Ellis Bell, and *Agnes Grey* by Acton Bell. In the absence of any more positive means of information on the subject, we would refer those who are curious upon this point to an article in the (London) *Critical Register* for January 26, containing extracts from the *Atlas* for Jan. 22, *Jerrold's Newspaper* for Jan. 15, and the *Britannia* of the same date, where the three publications in question are severally referred to the names above mentioned."*

George Nichols, Jr. was ever meticulous, neat and exact — almost too attentive in all that he did and wrote. This is to be noted in his fine, but beautiful handwriting for which one almost needs a microscope. It is also to be noted that all the letters which he received and kept, and his correspondence was voluminous, are found folded and labeled on the back with the exact date, and the name of the sender.

A most curious book kept by George as a young man is "Book of Meals," as he titles it, minutely recording every meal served in the large family home and just which members of the family attended. This book is indeed a curiosity, and a lasting tribute to George's fine and exact calculations and handwriting. The book was kept in George's household from 1866-77.

Another idiosyncracy was George's habit of picking up his plate before every meal at the table, and dusting it carefully with a soft clean napkin which was placed beside him for the purpose. His good natured and easy-going wife, Susan, evidently accepted this rite and routine at her table; perhaps she might not, had she not been, as even her devoted family attested, a rather easy-going cook and housekeeper.

The Civil War years proved a trying time for all. However, young Mary Nichols writes in frivolous vein of the gay whirl at this time, in which she and her sisters had their eventful part. We find here injected mention of a sad event of this year — the death of Charles Sanders, the beloved Treadwell-Nichols connection of many years. So Mary writes to her cousins:

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*The literary acumen of George Nichols was never more apparent than here, when it is remembered that the Brontes had not yet been identified by the literary cognoscenti on either side of the Atlantic Ocean.

"Cambridge 1862

" . . . I feel so excited I can hardly think of anything but the war. Boston is in a great state of excitement — troops are leaving daily flags waving and government carts going round full of blankets for the troops — We have a flag out of one of the windows in front of the house and we all wear red white and blue streamers and bows — Lill has a lovely bow — one side is white ribbon with scarlet velvet run on and the other is blue with 34 little stars made of beads. It really is very pretty and national looking. The students do not allow Dixie's Land to be sung in college but sing Star spangled banner Yankee Doodle and such tunes — Dixie's Land was sung at the theatre the other night and hissed. I wore a tarleton dress to Mary Hastings the other night it was very pretty white double skirt and a sash of pink tarleton going across my shoulder coming nearly to the bottom of my dress it was caught by a silver arrow . . . "

"Cambridge, April, 1865

" . . . The party was given by Mrs. Dr. Howe for the suffering East Tennesseans each person that was invited if they wanted to go bought a ticket for two dollars . . .Hat Luce and I went. Hat as Aurora with a pink tarleton covered with silver stars and a little veil, Luce as a French girl with a white tarleton-short — looped up over a pink silk hair powdered and put straight back and a little hat on trimmed with flowers, and "your humble" went as Mistress Anne Page. Yellow silk looped up with scarlet flowers over a white satin petticoat and my hair curled over a comb as usual and fixed real funny . . . I suppose you have heard of Uncle Sanders death, the funeral is tomorrow at eleven and I believe all the Nichols relations are coming here to dinner — Pity me or not? You can't think what fun it is having Lill at home. I suppose I enjoy it more than she does for being separated from her husband is not what she would choose still she bears it like a christian. She got a letter from the General this morning from Point Lookout where he is stationed for the present . . . "

Sunday, April 2, 1865 proved to be a most important day for the entire country. It held also its very especial thrill for George Nichols and his son John. On this day we have George Nichols' notation in his fine exact hand, and written on a yellowed secure envelope:

"Brought from Boston to Cambridge Sunday P. M. by Charles R.

Lamb to me, and carried round the neighborhood by my son John — being the first intelligence of the great event therein foreshadowed. Deeming this telegram worthy of preservation for the high *importance* of the intelligence contained therein, I have enclosed it in this envelope. G. N.

"Telegram received in Boston Sunday April 2, '65, announcing Grant's breaking Lee's lines in front of Petersburg, which resulted in the evacuation of Richmond that night, and the subsequent surrender of Lee, and the termination of the War of the Rebellion,

G. N."

..The actual telegram written on wafer-thin paper follows:

"Independent news room, City Point, Va., Apr. 2d, 8:30 A. M.

"President Lincoln telegraphs that at an early hour this morning Grant ordered a movement along his whole lines.

"*Desperate fighting is now going on.*

"Wright and Parks have broken through the enemy's lines in two places.

"Sheridan at One O'clock A. M. was reinforced by a division of infantry, and is now sweeping down from his army on the West.

A. Lincoln"

A letter, important for its date — April 15, 1865, was received by George Nichols from one of his business acquaintances:

"Boston, April 15, 1865

"My dear Sir,

"The news of the day is so overwhelming, that I can hardly bring my mind to bear on the ordinary occupation of life . . . "

So opens the business letter of John S. Clark on this day which marked Lincoln's assassination and death at the end of the Civil War, and, as might have been expected, this very prosaic note of business details has been preserved for more than a hundred years in the collection.

THE SIX DAUGHTERS of George Nichols, Jr. and his wife arrived in fairly rapid succession. All the girls, from the comments of their relatives and contemporaries, seemed to have been blessed by an outgoing charm, amiability and good looks. In a letter to an inquiring cousin, their father, wrote a neat, methodical statement of the date

of each one's birth, the death of one, and the marriages of the remaining five.

There was, first of all, Susan Farley, named for her young mother and her mother's mother, born in 1835; Sarah arrived a year later and died at twelve years; Harriet Farley, the namesake of her mother's aunt and step-mother, Harriet Farley Treadwell. There was the most beautiful of all, Eizabeth, "Lillie" for short, and the two youngest, Lucy and Mary.

The revered cousin of this Cambridge family, the Rev. John Taylor Gilman Nichols of Saco, Maine, who had settled in Cambridge after his retirement from his long pastorate, on an afternoon call at his Brattle Street cousins in 1860, was happy to find Susan and her daughters all at home. "Harriet looked particularly lovely," he found and "all Susan's girls are most engaging . . . " Another visiting relative, Charlotte Peirce, reports in a letter of 1861:

"Hatty came into the room, dressed in a new-fashioned dress, which was very pretty, genteel and becoming & she looked lovely. All Susan's daughters are certainly very engaging & interesting girls, and are much liked and beloved by everybody who knows them. Susan is delighted that George has purchased the house at 159 Brattle Street, especially as he got it at such a bargain. Last autumn he would have had to give much more for it. So this War has had one good effect already & that is enabling George to get a nice house & estate for half the value. However as much pleased as you may be pleased at George's' getting a house to suit him so cheap, yet I do not really suppose that you consider it sufficient reason for the War. Well, now he got it I hope we shall soon have an honorable peace."

From all accounts Susan's daughters must have markedly resembled their mother in their sunny, outgoing way and character, and a decided touch of light-hearted gayety in their nature. This was aided no doubt by coming to maturity in the Civil War years when the young men were all going into uniform and the patriotic neighborhood of Boston was seething with the romantic as well as the tragic. Lillie was sought in marriage by a General, no less, and married in 1863 at the age of twenty-one to General Edward W. Hincks of the Union Army, many years her senior. In due course her younger sisters, Lucy and Mary, married two gay and dashing officers, John and James White; John remained in the Army for some time after the cessation

of hostilities. Lucy moved eventually to New York, bore a large family and was pursued by homesickness for the home of her youth in old Cambridge.

Mary, the youngest girl, ever vivacious, temperamental and with an outstanding charm of wit and story-telling, did not enjoy her early marriage for long but returned within a year or two to her parents' Cambridge home with her handsome young son, Austin Nichols White. However, Mary was an outstanding example of devotion to duty, for whenever her spouse was in utter need of care or a nursing back to health she would return to him for brief periods, and was with him in his last illness.

Lillie was decidedly more successful in her war marriage. General Hincks was a fine man and a disciplined and tempered soldier. He made his young wife very happy as her letters written home from numerous army posts in various locations attest. One daughter, Bessie Hinks, was born to this couple, and one may see in Lillie's frequent letters what a great, and never-failing joy the child was to her parents — particularly perhaps to her father who was often mentioned as playing games with Bessie when Lillie would be writing home, sewing a new dress for the child or "preparing supper"', no doubt a delicious one, for this quiet, intimate and happy little family trio, in no matter what distant part of the country.

Bessie appears to have grown rapidly and beautifully toward womanhood. A charming school-girl essay in a finely formed hand, tied with a rose-pink ribbon, is a reminder of her school days. The essay is strangely titled "On the beauty of unfulfillment," and instances this beauty most prettily and touchingly in the "unopened bud of a flower," "the young unfurled green leaf." It is a touching essay and a strange one for a young girl of fourteen years to have conceived.

On the Fourth of July in the year 1885 when Bessie was just seventeen years old, and recently admitted as a freshman to Radcliffe College, she was walking from her grandmother's house on Brattle Street down toward the college in her full-skirted organdie dress when she must have stepped on a firecracker. There was an instant explosion, her skirt went up in quick flames and she was burned to death, barely living for a tortured twenty-four hours. The tragedy is recorded in the family collection through a letter from Bessie's uncle, John W. T. Nichols in New York.

The conventionally pious hope expressed that the parents might accept this in a "spirit of submission" may have been realized in some external fashion. But the truth is that Bessie's mother never rallied, became an invalid and died soon after, staying on in her parents' house in Cambridge. The General, who appears to have been a valiant soldier in many campaigns, was able to survive the loss of his wife and daughter only by a year. Lillie's younger brother, John, who had ever claimed Lillie as his favorite sister, would never allow a firecracker to be set off in his household by his own young family of lively children. They were told that the Fourth of July was a day to be kept quietly and at home in memory of a young cousin whom they had, however, never known.

Susan Treadwell Nichols, the eldest daughter of George and Susan, seems to have inherited her father's outstanding intellect. She did not marry until considerably later in life than her sisters, and studied art and painting seriously before her marriage in 1863 to Robert Carter, an already distinguished older man, a veteran newspaper man, involved in many political campaigns.

Susan and Robert lived apparently an interesting and worldly life, first in Rochester, N. Y., where he was in charge of the *Democrat,* an important newspaper publication. In Rochester Susan's mother and young brother John made a happy visit on the couple, and Susan of Cambridge appears through her letters to have been impressed with the luxury and entertaining of her brilliant daughter's menage.

In 1870, Mr. Carter's health failing him, he gave up his arduous editorship in Rochester and removed to Washington, D. C., to fill various temporary newspaper assignments and follow independent literary pursuits for the remaining ten years of his life. Meanwhile, Susan was pursuing her studies in Art and Painting and making a secure and influential place for herself in the artistic and literary community of New York. She studied for a time at New York's Cooper Union and there worked her way up in teaching, to become, finally, the Cooper's first "Dean of Women."

After her husband's death in 1879, Susan Carter devoted herself more and more assiduously to the World of Art. Every summer she went to Europe to travel in Italy and France, and to keep in touch with the developments in the Art world there. She wrote letters home from Europe and renewed her old Cambridge friendships delightfully in England with the literary and artistic friends of Boston, New York

and Salem. She also visited the James Russell Lowells while he was Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

But Susan was ever a woman of large mind and heart and enjoyed also the casual friends met on her travels. One of the most congenial of these who remained a lifelong friend, not only of her own but of her entire New York family, was Captain Horatio McKay of the Cunard Line, on whose ships she regularly crossed.

Because of seriously failing health Susan felt she must resign her important and demanding position in the ever-expanding work of the Cooper Institute, and the letters which she received at this time from her many important friends — painters, writers and administrators — are a tribute to her twenty years of devoted work for the great New York Institution.

Like her father before her, Susan worked to the end. Shortly after her retirement she died at the home of her sister, Lucy, near New York. Her brother, John Nichols, who with his family had shared many of his older sister's friendships, and whose hospitable West 11th Street home had always been open to his sister and her friends, received many tributes at her passing.

It may be truthfully said that Susan Nichols Carter was the most intellectually able of any of the women of the Peirce-Nichols family. In saying this, and reviewing her life and its achievements, I feel that in justice to her I should repeat one of her own tenets, often emphasized in her teaching and administrative work: "There should be no double standard for achievement in Art or along any line. It does not matter in the least whether one is considering the work of a man or a woman — it is the quality of the work that counts."

In a letter to her cousin, John W. T. Nichols of New York, written in 1918 when John was already to celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday, Martha wrote:

" . . . It is my privilege to remember the joy following the announcement of your birth, the first son after six daughters, and I always felt that the joy in your mother's heart deepened with each succeeding year . . . "

"I should think you would look back on your life with keen satisfaction, and I hope for many years of happiness with your lovely wife and children and grandchildren whom you bless with your cheer and thoughtfulness."

While a more and more devoted New Yorker since his removal there with his family in the year 1883, John Nichols seems to have remained, even to the last, most deeply rooted in Salem, home of his grandfathers and ancestors. His letters to his cousins living their lives out as the traditional family "Aunties" or "Maidens" were frequent, and always concerned with some family matter.

George Nichols, jr. was all his life a conscientious worker; a perfectionist in his smallest undertakings. It was generally agreed by his family and those who knew and observed him closely that in the last years of his life, with diminished health and rapidly failing eyesight, his demanding literary work was becoming more of a burden than he could bear; yet, involved as he still was with editing the voluminous correspondence of his friend and admiration, Charles Sumner, he forced himself to finish this work. As soon as it was done, he collapsed and died but a few months later. At his death on July 7, 1882, his close associate and friend of many years, the Rev. Dr. Peabody, wrote to his widow a tribute to his life of meticulous scholarship and industry:

"Your husband has been very dear to me. I have known him for fifty-eight years, and for more than half a century we have lived in intimate friendship over which no cloud or shadow has ever passed . . . Since the news of his departure reached me, I have been recalling the memories of our intimacy . . . While I cherish these sacred memories of him, I have too, a knowledge of what ought to have been more extensively known, his large, thorough and profound scholarship and learning. Had he done for himself a fourth part of what he had done for others, he would have won a foremost reputation whether in Theology or in Literature. He has made books without the world's knowing it. His Uncles' *Hours with the Evangelists* was left in a condition that but for your husband's learning, skill and patience . . . could never have seen the light, and there are not a few clear shining lights that but for his careful trimming of the wick, would have had but a very dim and hazy lustre . . . I earnestly hope, that with the completed edition of Sumner's writings there may be some explicit acknowledgement of the immense amount of research, critical skill and arduous toil that have been expended in editing it . . . "

It seems appropriate to end this chapter with some of the tributes, public and private, to George Nichols, Jr.

"Aug. 23 1882

"Mrs. Nichols

Dear Madam

I thank you very much for allowing me to have for the Class Book the copy of Rev. Mr. Peabody's letter on the death of your excellent husband, one of the worthiest of the Class of 1828. I have always esteemed him very much since our college days; but I never knew the many fine traits that he possessed. He was so modest and desired so little to put himself forward that few of us have fully appreciated all his admirable traits of character. So, the letter you kindly allow us to place in the Book will always remain as a voucher of these qualities and of his learning of which autobiographical sketch gives no hint.

"I remain, dear Madam

"Gratefully & respectfully yours

Henry I. Bowditch

Secretary to the Class of 1828"

Under the title "Bits of Experience, Observation and Gossip in Cambridge and Boston," a popular column in a local newspaper, there is published an interesting *vignette* of George Nichols, Jr., and his career:

"On any day one was sure to meet another remarkable man and thorough scholar, one of the keenest critics and most accurate, best-equipped proof readers in America — George Nichols. Cambridge lost one of its clearest most incisive intellects when he passed on; a man of large resources, whose kingdom was the world of books; cordial in manner, full of anecdote and information concerning the authors and subjects which engrossed him. His personality was so pronounced that it left its influence upon those with whom he was closely associated. A critic, but a kindly one, his opinion carried weight; and his scholarship and his thoroughness, even to the minutest detail, were to be relied upon without appeal."

Again in a leading obituary article in the Boston *Evening Transcript* quite strikingly captioned "The Blind Proof-reader", the personality of this quiet, scholarly man is portrayed:

"THE BLIND PROOFREADER"

"To return to the crowded alcoves and corridors of the Old Gore

Hall, we meet in memory the figure of Mr. Nichols, "the blind proof-reader." Day in and day out he could be seen scrutinizing the catalogues and investigating authorities. So near-sighted was he that he would have to hold a paper close to his eyes to see the writing, and yet so accurate and keen and quick was his vision that no error could escape him. Not only was his own work most painstaking, but many a mistake in the entries of the library would be brought to light by him and called to the attention of the librarian. His sweet and kindly nature attracted everyone. One day in his search for a book he descried a tender little bird fluttering under the roof of the highest story. He could not leave the little creature to suffer through the hot night and to beat its dusky wings as it cried for help, but he must make requisition for pages and ladders until it was free. To Mr. Nichols's friendship and tireless energy Charles Sumner owed much. The senator's massive knowledge was made available by this friend who so carefully verified the many quotations in the speeches that the force of the argument could not be successfully assailed."

From the Boston *Herald* came the following tribute:

"Something of the Life of a Celebrated Proof Reader

"During the past 4 years thousands of persons have visited the library of Harvard University, and most of them have probably noticed with curiosity a short-sighted and absorbed scholar moving noiselessly to and fro, or poring over some volume which he held within an inch or two of eyes, overshadowed by shaggy brows. This was the late Mr. George Nichols, who had become to graduates of Harvard and to citizens of Cambridge as fully identified with the library as its very alcoves and volumes. A faithful and conscientious worker, one of the best proof readers in the United States, and an exemplary citizen was Mr. Nichols. He was born in Salem in 1809 and graduated at Harvard College in 1828. Among his classmates were George S. Hilliard and Hon. Robert C. Winthrop. Mr. Nichols studied at the Harvard divinity school, he went to Meadville to serve as private tutor in the well known family of the Huidekupers, one of his pupils being Prof. Huidekuper, the author of 'Judaism in Rome.' In 1833, James Munroe and George Nichols bought of Brown, Shattuck & Co., the University book store in Cambridge. It is a curious and noteworthy incident that Messrs. Munroe & Nichols were the first publishers in the world to bring out in book form the 'Sartor Resartus' of Carlyle.

The work, as is well known, was published in Fraser's magazine in parts, and it was Dr. Frederick H. Hedge who one day came into the publishing house of Monroe (sic) & Nichols with the 'Sartor Resartus' which he prevailed upon them to publish. In 1842 the University Press in Cambridge was bought by Charles R. Medcalf, Owen S. Keith and George Nichols. At this time almost all the text books used in the college were printed at this press, which was already famous for the accuracy and beauty of its work. In the final issue of the Harvard Register, Mr. Marshall T. Bigelow says that the reputation of Mr. Nichols for accurate supervision of the proof reading was as extended as was that of Mr. Charles Folsom (a former librarian of Harvard and styled by Prescott the 'Harvard Aldus'). It was about 1843 that Mr. Nichols began to work in the Harvard library. He was remarkable for the extreme accuracy with which he did his work, and would go over his manuscripts again and again to insure their perfection. Some 19 years ago he began the great task of editing the complete works of Charles Sumner for Lee & Shepard. About the time that the copy of the last volume left his hands, he was attacked by the sickness which proved to be his last. He had lived to see the completion of the great work of his life, and there seemed to be nothing more for him to live for. While Mr. Sumner lived, the corrected proofs were sent to him at Washington. After his death they were read by Mr. Longfellow, one of the literary executors of the Sumner estate. Mr. Nichols had previously edited Burke's works for Little, Brown & Co., and thus brought to his Sumner task faculties trained to the severest fidelity. Mr. Sumner was very careless in making his quotations and references, and was quite apt to attribute a bit of poetry or a paragraph from an English speech to the wrong author. Once when Mr. Nichols had corrected his figures, Sumner said: 'My dear Mr. Nichols, I wouldn't bother with these figures; they have served my purpose and why not let them stand?' "

From another newspaper came this sketch:

"Rev. George Nichols, graduated in Harvard class of 1828, at the age of nineteen; he then studied at the Theological school in Cambridge, and after a ministry of three years, commencing at Meadville, felt that his calling was to literature rather than divinity. Very soon he found his place, — a place that no one could fill so well. In partnership with Rev. John Owen, as a book pubisher, he saw the necessity

of better proof-reading than could then be obtained in America; and very soon his critical accuracy, his unwearied painstaking, his wide knowledge of books, his perfect fidelity to every trust, induced President Quincy to bring him to Cambridge, into a position which he had admirably filled for forty years.

"Mr. Nichols was anything but a common proof-reader. Though Charles Sumner had said to him that he would publish no more if he could not have George Nichols for a critic, Mr. Nichols would not yield even to him where he felt he was right; and the senator gave up to the proof-reader . . .

"Besides the constancy of toil which devoted more than ten hours a day to a confining task, Mr. Nichols was so modest that he would not permit W. H. Prescott to acknowledge his indebtedness for that unintermitted care which brought each of his works into the most perfect form a standard history could take.

"Nor were there higher qualities lacking in his experience. The thorough preparation of his uncle's work, 'Hours with the Evangelists,' interested him so that he overstrained his eyes, so that they never recovered entirely. And, when the oculist assured him seven years ago that he must relinquish his business or his eyesight, he determined at any cost to complete the great charge of Mr. Sumner's literary bequest, though with feeble help from only one eye . . . "

We end this chapter with a personal letter of condolence:

"Washington
Ebbett House
July 11, 1882

"My dear Mrs. Nichols:

. . . I can sincerely say that there was no one in Cambridge whom I more profoundly respected than your husband, and this sentiment I am sure was shared by our whole Cambridge community.

"I respected not only his fine and exalted character and his singleheartedness, but I admired his scholarship, and especially the modest way in which he made that scholarship available to cover the literary defects of those more ambitious, but less accomplished than himself.

"It was my good fortune to receive his approbation for some literary work of my own and no appreciation that I ever received was more precious to me. I regarded it as the next thing to literary fame.

"But my dear Mrs. Nichols the greatest loss to Cambridge will come

if this loss should break up that beautiful simple home with its warm hospitalities and genial neighborly influence, which through yourself, no less than through your husband, was a perfect type of the best old-fashioned homes of New England. I am with the deepest sympathy your friend and neighbor,

John L. Hayes"

The "beautiful simple home" (the Hooper-Lee-Nichols House) has been sometimes called the oldest house in Cambridge, and its large central stack chimney shows that it belongs to an early period of New England architecture; but it was originally a farmhouse in Watertown, as Sparks street was the westerly limit of Cambridge until 1754.

"The first owner appears to have been Robert Holmes, whose son John Holmes married Hannah, daughter of Deacon Samuel Thatcher, in 1664." The house passed out of the Holmes family in 1685 when it was sold to Dr. Richard Hooper. Dr. Hooper of Newport, Rhode Island sold the house to Cornelius Waldo, merchant, of Boston but there is no proof that the new owner lived here. His widow sold it to Judge Joseph Lee, the son of a shipbuilder of Boston . . . Judge Lee remodeled the house to make it more fit for a gentleman's residence. "He was a good neighbor, gentlemanly in his manners, and sincere in his friendships. He lived here peacefully to a ripe old age, dying in 1802 at the age of ninety-three. His greatniece, Mrs. Deborah Carpenter, inherited the house; she also lived to be very old, dying at ninety-five."

The Nichols family documents lead us to believe that the house at 159 Brattle Street, Cambridge was rented to George Nichols of Cambridge at $125 per year in 1850 by Mrs. Carpenter.

"In 1860 the house was bought by Mr. George Nichols of Cambridge and Salem. He was a noted proof reader, the friend of many authors and poets. He had several daughters and a son, John, the youngest of the family. His wife was most sociable; she was interested in all the parish work of Christ Church and a most helpful friend to all in need. She took an active part in the society of the town and was especially fond of young people. She had for some years what she called a "Constellation Class," composed of the boys and girls of the neighborhood. It was considered an honor to be asked to belong to it. The young people assembled here one evening each week after dark, and she took them out of doors and showed them the stars, told their

names, and related the old myths suggested by the names of the constellations. Afterwards all went into the house, where nuts or doughnuts or gingerbread were served and games were played. In her later years Mrs Nichols did not follow the changing dictates of fashion. She wore dark gowns open at the neck, finished with a white mull kerchief. She was sprightly and entertaining and a great favorite with all. One of her daughter's children said once, "I know why she is called grandmother; it's because she is so grand." Mr. Nichols heard that the mahogany communion railing at St. Paul's Church in Boston was to be taken down and replaced by a new one. He bought it and set it up on the roof, where it gave a finish to the house. Mr. and Mrs. Nichols lived here until death took them, and the house remained for years in the hands of members of the family. The last owner was Austin White, a grandson."*

NOTE

This was a separate and additional Family record in the 1835 (Family) Bible:

George Nichols married Susan Farley Treadwell, M. Oct. 7, 1834. Their children are:

Susan, b. Nov. 20, 1835; m. June 10, 1864
Sarah Peirce Nichols, b. March 14, 1835; d. Dec. 16, 1848
Harriet Farley Nichols, b. Aug. 14, 1840; m. June 8th, 1865.
Elizabeth Peirce Nichols, b. March 15, 1843; m. Sept. 3, 1863
Lucy Nichols, b. Sept. 21, 1844; m. Sept. 14, 1865.
Mary Nichols, b. April 1st, 1845; m. April 29th, 1869.
John White Treadwell Nichols, b. Oct. 30, 1852.

Susan married Robert Carter of New York June 29th, 1864.
Sarah died.
Harriet married Charles R. Lamb, has son C. R. Lamb
" George Nichols Lamb
Elizabeth Peirce married Edward Winslow Hincks
dau. Bessie Hincks

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*From publications the Cambridge Historical Society (XVI)— Proceedings for the Year 1922. *The Hooper-Lee-Nichols House* by Mary Isabella Gozzaldi.

Lucy married John Eaton White	dau.	Anna White
	"	Mary Nichols White
	son	Stephen Reynolds White
Mary married James Cushing White	son	Austin Treadwell White

John H. Nichols married Sarah Augusta Leach, three children.

XI

GEORGE NICHOLS, JR. INTRODUCES THE TREADWELLS

THERE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TWO Salems: the "Uptown" Salem, home of the Nicholses, Ropeses, Pickerings and others, and "Downtown" Salem, of the Treadwells, and here I discern not a distinction of money or of "class," but rather of "kind."

Susan Farley Treadwell, whom George Nichols, Jr. married in 1834, and the Treadwells of Salem and Ipswich for several generations, were a different breed from the Nichols; yet in the deep and lifelong attachment of George Nichols of Federal and Chestnut Streets and Susan Farley Treadwell of Warren Street, Salem, the two disparates ever appear to complement each other and their eventual marriage resulted in a strong and interesting line. Susan appears to have been something of a flirt — serious and sincere also but very much within limits; certainly she was very different from the intellectual Lydia Nichols or from Lydia's cousin, the devoted and dedicated wife and mother Sally Peirce, a greatly loved and revered model of women in the Nichols family. Also, Susan from her birth must have been opposite to her George's older sisters, Sarah, Lydia, Elizabeth and Mary Jane, the young women of the household, to whom young George grew up accustomed; women even when young, were clearly destined to be "old maids."

The good family friend Mrs. Johannot was related to the Treadwells and appears to have felt a certain responsibility for Susan. She invited Susan to visit her at one time, when she was living in the Nichols-Peirce family home at 80 Federal Street, in order to give the young girl a little training in more quiet ways and manners: "I did wish to teach Susan to close the door quietly behind her," she remarked to a friend, "or indeed I should be happy if I might teach her to close the door at all." Neither did Mrs. Johannot approve of Susan running frequently around the corner to Chestnut Street to see her young friend George Nichols and to enjoy a good laugh with George's handsome and humorous younger brother John.

Even some years previous to the definite engagement the young people were interested in each other. A letter from George's younger brother John in Salem to George at Harvard is an amusing answer to George's request of him to send some news of Susan, and of Susan's flirtatious desire to draw handsome young John into the "understanding":

"Salem, December 4th, 1826
"Dear George:

At Susan's request, I commence the almost fruitless attempt of communicating *news,* but what kind she did not say. If that which interests merchants, I have only to say that Flour has risen both in England and in this country. On the 2nd inst. it was sold in Boston at 7 — three-fourth, and yesterday at nine dollars per bbl. It was our good fortune to sell 72 bbls. of the most ordinary quality at $8, and also our cottons, wht whole amount of yesterdays sales was about $700.

"But I can hardly think that S referred to that kind of news, but probably to the family concerns. I spent Monday evening at Mr. Treadwell's as you requested, and found Mr. and Mrs. Treadwell engaged in writing, Susan entirely taken up with her Spanish, and the children very busy with their knitting work; and not a word escaped the lips of any to break the solemn silence. But when I entered the room the scene was almost instantly changed: the merry laughter and lively conversation dispelled the gloom from their faces and restored them to their usual cheerfulness. Susan spent Tuesday afternoon at our house, and her time passed so pleasantly that she forgot to go till nine o'clock, which is half an hour beyond her rule.

"S has become a *noted thief* (as she says) and very narrowly escaped Mr. Dutch's grasp, as he came into the store immediately after she had been detected stealing almonds. And likewise you will probably be called upon to pay the debts you contracted the other day at our store for pencils . . . "

But perhaps we may not wonder that Susan confessed that she did not enjoy herself at Mrs. Johannot's, that she "was homesick and desired to go home."

To understand Susan one must try to understand her father, John White Treadwell, whom she appears to have greatly resembled, and by whom she was ever deeply influenced. One characteristic and outstanding talent which both Susan and her father shared is that both

were first-rate "Letter-Writers," and in an informal way "Journalists." These two wrote not to instruct and admonish their children, not to leave their precepts to posterity, not to list their ships or their enterprises; rather they wrote from the letter-writer's chief concern, their interest in people, their wish to put themselves on paper before their friends and acquaintances — in short they wrote from all the human and gregarious instincts. Even if their travels were merely a journey around their sitting-room or garden, there would still be an adventure to relate. And in their journeys which, fortunately for us, took them very much farther afield, they clearly enjoyed themselves for the "joy of the road" and not merely for the arrival!

In March of 1882 when Susan was over seventy years old, and had recently become a widow, her devoted son John brought her a book and "a new-style of pen, the stylographic" with the request that she write in it some reminiscences of her life and anecdotes of her experience. Susan immediately and gladly agreed, and in time was completed her "Magnum Opus" — a most delightful inheritance for the generations to come, written in five full school copybooks by her facile pen!

Characteristically, Susan starts her family chronicle and brings it down to her time entirely through the line of her father. So we learn that:

"The first record of a Treadwell is of Elizabeth White's marriage to Jacob Treadwell of Ipswich, October 2, 1782. She was his second wife. He died December 3, 1814. Their Oldest son was John White Treadwell, born July 12, 1785.

"I commence as perhaps I should, with an introduction first to my great Grandfather, John White, in his character of lover to Miss Bailey, daughter of Mr. Thomas Bailey, a respectable citizen of Salem, a straight Quaker. This may have been the reason of his opposing the marriage of his daughter to a very determined and progressive person as J. W. is proved to be:

'To Mr. Thomas Bailey, Salem

'Salem May 20, 1743

'Dear Sir,

Very lately I understand that you cannot compose yourself that I should still make my addresses to your daughter Abigail. For what reason I would be very glad to know, Sir. You know ever since I was

a child I have loved her, as I have given account to you, Sir. — I beg you would make yourself entirely easy & content with what God in his all wise Providence has alotted & by no means to hurt or ruin your daughter in relation.

'Sir, to let you know it, I scorn that you should put any slight upon me, notwithstanding I am poor and miserable. What end, Sir, do you think I have in spending my time, as I may call it, for so is all our time! I say what end in so doing Do you think it for my worldly advantage? No, it is from pure affection & nothing else.

'However, if you have anything to object to either to my person, purse, or religion, pray discover it to me privately that I may consider and weigh the same. Sir, I value myself more highly than to bind myself to any, without really considering what I am doing, which I pray God & do so continually that he may lead me to the choice of a person agreeable both for promoting His glory & my contentment in this life. Again, Sir, I would let you know also, that in the marriage state I aim higher, by the blessing of God, than only a bed fellow, or the fashion of the world. I trust she does also Sir. I desire to reverence you as I ought, being her Father, who has my heart & with a view of completing my love, by the blessing of Heaven, sharing life. I presume so to say, considering & persuading myself that she loves me & not in vain!

'Sir, I willingly acknowledge that it is prudent in you to lead your children according to your own fancy but to *drive* Sir, I am persuaded will not do, considering she is of a tender disposition.

'Sir, I conclude, wishing you all happiness in life and after & subscribe myself yours to serve in all that is right.

John White, Jr.'

"Perhaps" Susan goes on, "she persuaded her husband to look more favorably upon John White, after his manly letter, as he & their daughter Abigail were married June 4th, 1745. Mr. Charles Sanders has informed me that they lived in their old age in a very nice house, afterwards the Knapp house in the East end of Essex Street in Salem. He, an elegant gentleman, was often found engaged in reading or writing with black velvet cap and tassel on his head, & a rich dressing gown, & woe to the noisy boys who visited his house as relatives but sometimes disturbed him in his study! They had ten children of whom my grandmother Elizabeth White was the fifth. They lost several. August 2, 1776 Mrs. John White died, & her husband remarks of her

'she was lovely in her life & I think happy in her death, — a sincere christian, appeared to be!'

"the letters I have copied were given to my father by an old Quaker 'Friend Dean' of Salem who found them among his family letters, which we value much as proving the good blood of our ancestors on my Father's side."

Susan goes on . . . To be sure she outlines her mother's fine lineage also through Farleys and Felt's *Annals of Ispwich*. But it is very evident throughout her journal that her own emotional attachment and "feeling of inheritance" is on the side of her father's family, the Treadwells.

Another page in the old family account book tells of Abigail's parentage:

"Salem — October 8, 1725
"My dear Heart,

Having this good opportunity to inform thee that our family is all in good health, I send thee word my dear I am sorry for thy misfortune, and I hope the Lord will give thee patience and order all things for the best. I have not time to add much but thou must judge in some measure of the sorrow that I have at home by the trouble that thou dost meet in my absence. So my dear heart take good care of thyself I do entreat of thee and bid farewell remaining thy loving wife until death.

"Desire Bailey

For Thomas Bailey"

Desire Dean had married Thomas Bailey, Quaker, the ninth of October 1720. Three children, Joseph, Elizabeth and Thomas, their children, were born before Abigail who was born May 4th, 1728.

1743 Thomas Jr. married Alice Pesley in Haverhill. April 1753, the tenth child was born. 1783 in January, mother Bailey died.

Susan's family, the Treadwells, also tell of themselves eloquently through very full genealogical records and through an ancient Bible enfolded in a very old and beautiful red damask cover, and this Bible is still accompanied by its stand among the family treasures which today are to be found in the Essex Institute. On a blank page we may read this notation:

"This is the family Bible of my Father, Jacob Treadwell, who died in the year 1814. From some unaccountable accident or carelessness was sold among his other effects, and was purchased by Jabez Farley of Ipswich. I purchased it from his widow a few years since and value it as a choice family relic. In my childhood I was familiar with its sacred pages, and am made now happy in remembrance of my father's family prayers, a general Thanksgiving in a church service being always repeated by him."

On the next page was another notation as follows: "John W. Treadwell's Bible which was the family Bible of my parents in my childhood, and as such is of great value to me, and my children and posterity are enjoined to preserve it and cherish its teachings.

Salem, July 4, 1853."

In a letter to her mother, written in the year 1840, Susan proudly describes in detail the family crest which she is embroidering, as follows:

"Dear Mother,

"I send herewith dear Grandma's Coat of Arms which I am happy to have completed & hope I have done so to your satisfaction (but a notation indicates that the work of enbroidery was yet not finished to Susan's satisfaction when she wrote.)

"The colored leaves are called the 'Mantlings'

"The birds are called the 'Crests'

"The roll under the 'wreath'

(Red and silver indicate Courage)

"Under that 'The Helmets'

" " " 'The Escutcheon'

"Then 'Chevrons'

"The Lion and Swords 'The Charges'

"Under the Escutcheon is the Scroll containing the name.

"You may note that the Lion Rampant signifies Strength and Valor."*

The religious life and faith of John White Treadwell may perhaps best be traced to this account and letter given in his devoted daughter

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*Unfortunately it has been impossible to locate this particular Treadwell Coat of Arms in the Family Collection or at the New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Susan's family chronicle when she writes on February 6, 1887:

". . . last week, my sister Elizabeth brought to me a letter written by him to his betrothed wife, while absent on a voyage in which he was wrecked in which his christian trust & courage is so manifested that I think a copy of it will add to the value of these memories & serve as an example & stimulus to his descendants better than anything I could write of him:

'On board English Ship Samuel Barnett
London view Sept. 10, 1804

'My dear Susan,

Almighty God has wrought for your John, a marvellous deliverance & my tongue shall never cease to lisp praise & thanksgiving to His holy name!

'On Sunday morning, 27th August, we were overtaken by a tremendous hurricane which upset our vessel about 8 o'clock in the morning. Immediately after, while clinging to the bottom of the vessel myself with all the crew, (captain excepted) were washed from the vessel's bottom, by a sea which broke over us. Two poor fellows were drowned, the remainder of us succeeded in regaining the vessel by swimming. The vessel's masts being cut away, she swam upon her bottom full of water. We lashed ourselves to the highest point of the vessel, but were, the principal part of the time, immersed in the waves.

'On Sunday night the sea, then extremely furious broke over us almost incessently. Another of the crew perished in the night, & had not the tempest abated on Monday morning we must all have soon followed him; but Thanks to Almighty God our prayers were answered, the raging of the tempest was stilled, the wind ceased & the sea was calm!

'Conceive, Susan, if it be possible, our condition! In the mid ocean, surrounded by billows which every moment threatened to swallow us up, & usher us into the presence of our God! This indeed was a trial, all the fortitude of one whose whole life had been shaped by the precepts of the son of God, would have been scarcely adequate to render him composed. Do you ask what were my feelings? I was more composed and resigned than perhaps you would imagine. A realizing sense of my aggravated sins entertained for a length of time previous a conviction of the necessity of repentance and the

importance of securing an interest in the redeeming love of our Saviour, armed me as it were against the terrors which surrounded me. After devoting four days on the wreck to incessant, humble & devout prayer, we experienced the truth of the words of the Psalmist, "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call him in truth, He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him, he also will hear their cry & will save them."

'On Wednesday afternoon we were taken off the wreck, by the ship "Sam. Barnett" from Jamaica, bound to London. The Captain & a lady passenger have treated us with every kind & tender attention which humanity can dictate. When I was taken off I was exceedingly swollen, bruised & lacerated; but in consequence of the friendly aid & medical assistance afforded me by the lady & Captain I have been raised from a dying condition, to a comfortable state of health, & am now able to walk firmly & my appetite is good.

'The providences which I have witnessed in this calamity will cause credulity to hesitate. When I relate to you the manner provisions & water were sent to us while on the wreck, & the circumstances which caused the ship to fall in with us, as she did, you will be no less astonished than rejoiced! I have not time now to particularize them, but I shall write you again immediately. Thus, Susan, have I been snatched from the grave. While I live, will I praise the Lord & sing praises unto my God!

'My loss, as you may suppose, has been great, all that I saved was upon my back, pantaloons, shirt, coat & waistcoat, taking into the calculation my clothes, watch, &c, &c, together with what I had not insured, I hazard little in saying it amounts to 2000 dollars. But my life has been spared, & I am in health. I shall endeavor to reach home as soon as circumstances will permit, and accept as usual the assurances of

'Your John' "

So John White Treadwell is another sailor for the family's seafairing annals, a fine and courageous one. But he never captained any ship on an East Indian voyage so far as the records go. A "Captain" perhaps must be something a bit different from young John, handsome, temperamental, courageous, but clearly of an emotional type — less disciplined and Spartan one would judge from the letters and journals than the young Nichols sailors. In any critical

situation one would feel more sure of the Nichols cool, hardheadness as perhaps of the Treadwell warmth and dash. However this may be, John Treadwell kept his "shipwreck vow" on his return to Salem and to his betrothed. He became a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, the most fashionable church in Salem of that day, and remained a staunch churchman till his dying day. He settled down to a regular and prosperous business life and career, and was outstandingly successful as a banker at home, and a man of affairs with interests far from his home town of Salem. A letter treasured in his family, and ultimately welcomed in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society, is one received from Henry Clay, the Kentuckian with whom he had business dealings:

Ashland 15th Sept. 1831

"Dear Sir

I have received your favor of the 31st ult with a check for $39.11 being the bal. for my wool. I am perfectly satisfied & obliged by the disposition you made of it. I think it quite likely that it was not sufficiently washed, as it was my first experiment. I hope we shall do better hereafter.

I have been aware and regretted that the Tariff of 28 assessed an extravagant duty on low price wools of foreign production not coming into competition with those of our own Country. That matter ought to be remedied whenever a modification takes place of the country tariff. Our friends should soon turn their attention to the tariff with a view to the adjustment on the paymt on the public debt. The basis, I hope, will be adopted of preserving the protection unimpaired with a repeal or reduction of duties on articles not competing with American productions or manufacturers to an extent about equal to the Sinking Fund.

"I shall avail myself perhaps of your kind permission to introduce my friends to you.

"With great respect

Jno W. Treadwell Esq H. Clay"

Although, so far as can be ascertained, John never again went on any distant or globe circling voyage, there were several lesser ones to the West Indies. We have an interesting sequence of letters from him written to the Treadwell household in Salem where Susan awaited birth of her first child. These letters quoted below are to be seen

in the original in the Peabody Museum of Salem:

"John White Treadwell
Pleasant Street

"On Bd Brig *Success*

"Dear Susan

We are on board, and the prospect is favorable. I have just left Joseph and Stephen who assure me of their attentions to you. We must console ourselves with that best of all consolations that we are under the Guidance of that Being by whose Providence we have been peculiarly blest. My confidence in Divine protection is firm, and allays in a great measure my grief . . . Do not let Stephen forget to make $3,000 dollars insurance for me . . . On all occasions you will hear from me, and you have my continued prayers for your welfare — Adieu

"John"

"Havana, Dec. 27, 1810

"My dear Susan,

I wrote you yesterday by way of N. York. The Spainards are enjoying the Christmas Hollydays, and I can do nothing this week. From all appearances I shall make a profitable voyage—

"I am more and more anxious to hear from you. Write often. Vessels are daily coming. — I am by the blessing of Providence in health, and the climate is pleasant. My love to Harriet—

"In haste I am truly
Your John"

"Havana, Jany. 12, 1811

"My dear Susan:

I wrote you on the 9. By way of Baltimore, acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 20 Dec. To receive a line from you under present circumstances only 3 weeks from your hands was indeed a fortunate circumstance. It has given me new feelings entirely. I am getting along slowly with my business. I shall dispatch the Brig in about 4 days from New Orleans, and shall then make my sales and purchases as fast as policy shall dictate. Tell Harriet to let no conveyance escape her. You all know my extreme anxiety. Sam Ingersoll is about sailing for Vera Cruz. As he has a cargo of German linens, his not selling here is favourable for me.

"Enclosed is a draft on Messrs. Jno. H. Andrews & Co. ninety-eight dollars 87 cents — Ask our friends John or Stephen to present it for payment.

"In haste,
Your John"

"Havana, January 25, 1811

"My dear Susan:

I have of late my dear Susan absolutely overwhelmed you with letters. — I wrote you twice yesterday. — I find this an intolerable place. no books. no society. nothing pleasant except the climate and that is indeed beautiful. A serene sky, solubrious and withjust sufficient variations of heat to render it comfortable. — A Doct. Osgood and wife from Salisbury are living here. I visit them considerably and find them agreeable — On board the Sukey which conveys this. I have shipped a barrel fine oranges. I hope they will come to you without much injury. I have also put on board her a box containing 9 pots of preserves of different kinds. — I send you them for 2 reasons. First, they will be pleasant to eat and they will fill some of your glass utensils to advantage. But above all, they will serve as little presents to those friends whose kind attentions merit our warmest acknowledgements. I have also sent by her the $500 Spanish dollars on my account to be delivered on friend Jno. White. Out of which I have requested him to pay a note on which he is endorser of $320 dollars. The balance you may take if you want it. If not, let John use it till my return. —

"With affectionate remembrance to Harriet and all our friends, believe me

"as ever,
John"

Another interesting family document of 1810 consists of several old family letters later copied into the Treadwell account book. The following written to "sister Harriet," describes a party, and is unsigned — undoubtedly written by a family member:

"June 1810

"My dear sister Harriet

Most of the ladies wore silk dresses — with standingup collars of white muslin, with a fall of thread lace around them. Sarah, being a

bride, wore her white cambric — with a blue sash — and I being the bride's sister wore mine with my pink sash.

"Mrs. Joseph W. had a Brussells carpet on her best room. I think they must be very rich, and most people have only Riddle Minsters.

"in the Episcopal Church they all kneel instead of standing up in prayer.

"Parson Fisher gives very short sermons, and says Amen very loud.

"Now I have told you about a party and a church, and will only add that Sally Morse roasts meat in a sort of tin box with one side open towards the fire. She turns the spit often, and opening the cover bastes the meat, but we do not think it as nice a way — of cooling as our Jack, which I should like to hear clicking in the corner, while Patty can have her eye on the turkey all the time. I told Sally about the Jack being wound up like a clock, and she wished she had one here.

"Present my Duty to Sir and Ma'am and love to brothers and sisters."

The first recorded words of Susan are in her reports of her Sunday School teachings of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Salem. They show much clear and sincere insight into the realm of religious thought and preoccupation. One may well imagine that George Nichols and Susan Treadwell had an early and a strong and lasting bond in the religious bent of each, but their particular religious affiliations were very different. The Treadwells were never dissenters, but of an Episcopal and conservative cast, whereas the Nichols had been dissenters from the time of Cassandra, the Southwick Quakers, and the witch Susanna of the seventeenth century up to the time of young George Nichols, Jr., who was studying for the Unitarian Ministry. It is to be noted that reference is often made in his Diary to escorting his fiancée to her "Church-Door," when he, presumably, turned the other way to his. In a stray note written by my grandfather in his early ministry I read his statement that "It is true that many are turning from religion. This is because they think of religion as Dogma — whereas religion is the soul's true happiness."

Devoted as John White Treadwell was to his religion I can trace no evidence of martyrdom in his character, nor are there any dissenters or martyrs to their freedom of thought in the Treadwell family, as there had been in the Nichols. Judging by its "key member," John

White Treadwell, they swam more easily and naturally with the tide of any day.

Into this cozy world of Salem, in 1811, Susan, first child of John White Treadwell and his wife, Susan, was born while her father was anxiously awaiting word of her arrival on the brig *Success,* far away in Havana. Susan wrote:

"The house in which I was born was a small very old-fashioned (one) on Pleasant Street, the longest street, on the North side of the Common near what was then Briggs Court, the owner of the land being Mrs. Briggs, the mother-in-law of Mr. Baldwin who, in 1814 built the square brick house on the corner of the Court to the West side of which my father soon after removed. On the West corner of the Court Mr. Nathaniel Silsbee . . . built a very large and elegant brick house, with an extensive garden and grounds. A short distance from this was Andrews Street, where I went to Ma'm Masury's school. The small house in which I was born was removed down Briggs Court, toward the water, and near a small family burying ground . . . On the West side of the Common from Pleasant Street, ran Brown Street, on which first was a brick block of houses to Winter Street in which, in a brick house standing endwise to the street lived Judge Story, the eminent jurist, a charming man, who was President of the Merchants Bank of which my father was cashier, which occasioned a degree of intimacy . . . on the side of the present East Church stood our own little one-story schoolhouse, so we could see our companions leaving their houses for school, and at *recess* and early and later hours . . . playing on the mall."

Little Susan's childhood appears to have been a most happy one, surrounded by love as she was, and even after the death of her mother, when Aunt Harriet, her mother's sister, affectionately referred to in the early days of her father's letters from Havana, became her second mother. Susan herself tells in her later reminiscences of an incident very early in her life. She had lost her and her brother's new doll out of the little cart in which she was riding and dreaded the appearance of her parents on the scene; but on discovering her careless loss they said merely, "Oh, Susan did not realize what a large girl she had grown, so there was no room for her doll. We will get her a larger cart!"

"How happy I felt not to be scolded and mortified," Susan remembers later, "and how happy I was that I had such parents, for whom I thanked God in my prayers that night."

Another interesting memory of Susan's early childhood is related by her as follows:

"Every article then had to be prepared at home . . . There were no convenient confectioners to save care and labor . . . for those who invited their friends and would be glad to have their minds free from such unnecessary cares as jellies, blanc manges, whips and custards, which took the place of the popular ices and sherbets of a later day, and were the Second Course at about nine o'clock. At about six, there was handed to the company, formally arranged about the parlor, a waiter filled with cups of tea and coffee. A woman with this tray was followed by a young girl (our Sally Curtis) with cream, sugar and hot water. Then came in a black man with a large waiter on which was temptingly arranged the varying cakes with a front line with thin slices of bread and butter, biscuits, etc., to be disposed of first.

"But I regret to say that John and I, when we saw the waiter prepared in the front room, resolved to sit away from our mama and help ourselves as we chose to . . . We reached to the show basket, the crowning glory of the feast, and helped to a large piece of plum cake."

Another memory is of an old-fashioned "going-a-Maying." Six little girls were gathered around the door of an old-fashioned schoolhouse, a building one story high with three windows on the opposite sides, two rows of desks, each accommodating ten scholars, with lids to the desks behind which the little girls would often match a bit of muslin or enjoy together a bit of gossip until the teacher's suspicions being aroused he would call them by name and ask if they could study better with the lids of the desks before their faces. His desk was in the center of the East end of the room, raised a few steps above the floor and with a dark hole under the desk into which were thrown bits of paper or stamps or quills. In these days quill pens were used altogether. The Master was, during the writing hour, kept very busy mending them. Sometimes his smooth bald head was marked by the ink mischievously left in one of them, as he had when young formed the unneat habit of wiping his pen over his black hair and now when his hair was white and his head was bald the same

habit was imposed upon by some of his roguish scholars, and not until he sat at his dinner-table was he aware of the awful hyroglyphs (hieroglyphics) as his head presented, when his wife asked who had been writing upon his head.

The little girls were very intimate, living near together, and their mothers taking natural interest in their stories and amusements. The last day of April the girls formed a group to consider a grave question. At what time should they start the next morning on their Maying expedition? Some wanted to defer it until the next week, as they thot the apple blossoms were not yet in bloom and feared they could find no violets or columbine as the spring had been a cold one, but then they thought it would not be an English Maying and go they must on the first day of May, if only to return with dresses drabbled with dew. The wet feet were guarded against by the newly invented India rubber shoes.

Another memory of Susan Treadwell follows when she was a young engaged girl, still living in Salem in 1831:

"I was at a Sewing Circle at Lydia's who had been in Philadelphia, and we sat around a glowing coal fire.

"They had a large stove or furnace in their cellar and a hole in the floor of the parlor through which warm air came up, — and so instead of going to the fire, as we did when we had been out in the cold, people rushed up to the holes and put their feet over them. They are covered with an iron frame which opens and shuts and are called registers. The great advantage is that the whole room is warm. People are not obliged to sit up close to the fire and their poor backs are cold and shivery."

In a number of revealing and amusing letters of the family and other young people we have evidence that George and Susan had had a definite "understanding" for some years previous to their formally announced engagement. John, George's younger brother, who loved jokes and laughter, appears to have been entertained in furthering this romance and in delivering messages to Susan, still a school girl at home in Salem while her admirer, George, was away at Harvard. In the diary of young George Nichols we find this entry of the year 1831 when he had already been formally "engaged" to Susan for three years:

"Dined and passed part of the evening with Susan. Not very pleasantly, however, as Mr. Treadwell thinks it improper that we should have any conversation to ourselves. This construction of the properties of life may be as old as the hills, for ought I know — to me however it is the strangest of all the strange doctrines I ever heard of. I suppose 20 or 30 years ago a couple who were engaged never presumed to approach within speaking distance of each other. . . ."

After a six-year engagement, Susan was married at the age of twenty-three to her life-long friend and neighbor, George Nichols, Jr. Her wedding trip was by stage-coach from Salem to Cambridge in company not only of her bridegroom but of several of the children of her own family, her bridegroom's devoted brother and groomsman, John and "Elizabeth Florence, for twenty-six years my mother's faithful helper and friend, bearing in her careful hands a blue china *T. D.*, not trusting to the common conveyance."

And from the hour of her arrival, "Old Cambridge" was the dearly loved home of Susan and George with the exception of a short sojourn in nearby Brighton. Many years later Susan wrote to a friend:

"I wonder if you were so occupied by the pleasures of your gay and triumphant youth as not to notice the peculiar arrival of the old stagecoach through which was brought such a strong and affectionate tie with . . . yourself, and continued attachment to dear Old Cambridge, the Village . . . did you have a little prescience . . . ?

". . . the baskets, boxes and firkins of provisions, provided by dear mother, were (finally) removed from the back of the coach and, from the top, the grove of my plants among which was my husband's first gift, a sweet *Daphne Odora* which has gladdened me by its beauty and fragrance for the past five years and which, by the way, continued its bloom every season excepting the year of my precious daughter Sarah's death (1848), after which it furnished a bouquet for my silver wedding day in 1859, and I enjoyed its possession five years after.

"Then after all these were taken from the stage it drove off to the great relief of my extreme mortification . . ."

But Susan and George, "married and gone away" to Cambridge, were by no means forgotten by their family in the home city of Salem. In her reminiscences of later years Susan dwells on the de-

lightful "return visits" to George's family for the traditional Thanksgiving, and other large family gatherings, and to her own, evidently less formal and more intimate, Treadwell Christmases in the "house on Warren Street."

So soon as his beloved daughter Susan's oldest child "little Susan" was old enough to make the journey back to her mother's old home, the grandfather, John White Treadwell, made anxious plans for one such trip in the following letter addressed to his son-in-law George:

". . . It occured to me that it would be best, as you do not come down with Susan and as she will be awkwardly situated in a stage coach with her child, that I had better come up in a carryall and bring them home. I shall, therefore, come up on Tuesday or Wednesday next, if good weather in a good comfortable carryall and take them. If weather should not be good, on the first fair day afterwards, perhaps on fast day, as our fast (Good Friday) will be tomorrow . . ."

Susan appears to have made no distinction in her loyalty and affection between the Nichols and Treadwells. We quote Susan telling of the Treadwell Christmas in her Reminiscences as follows:

"I feel now in the mood for describing one of the dear Christmas occasions as celebrated by my own dear parents on Warren Street in my girlhood & followed still more when I had left home & could return there year after year with my little children as adding to the gaiety of the occasion, especially as it was considered the rule for us to go down the afternoon before so as to be in time to hear father read the fascinating poem

'Twas the night before Christmas
And all through the house
Not a creature was stirring
Not even a mouse,
And the stockings were hung
By the chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there!'

for the children's entertainment. After which they went into the parlor and hung their stockings of all sizes around the marble fireplace, sure that they must be filled by the next morning, as they

always were, and gave the greatest surprises and happiness to all, old and young, on the dear Christmas Day.

"We had only one or two besides our own special family at the table heavily laden, and beautifully adorned as it was, and I am sure the children will never forget the cordial welcome and generous commendation they all received, especially when they had helped store the raisins, blanche the almonds, and make the oranges look like lilies! Dear father asked a blessing and gave thanks in a most grateful and cheerful spirit, and such occasions have been never forgotten, and I hope may long be continued as a lovely family tradition!"

Worldly, kindly, calculating, temperamental, courageous and warm, the portraits of John White Treadwell in his youth as in his elder days are outstandingly handsome and distinguished in appearance. But the face of the older man shows the ascendancy of the material and the diminution of his earlier traits, as one would expect from the life he had chosen. Facile and charming with his pen and address, he could have made a successful diplomat or writer, preacher or actor, but he chose to be a banker and to add his bit, and it was a considerable one, to the prosperity of his native town and his Episcopal Church.

The following attests to the happy Treadwell home:

"Salem, January 12, 1829

"My dear Wife,

I arrived home last evg. about 6 o'clock and found "our little throng" assembled around the parlor fire, a good warm room, and Mr. Nichols and Uncle Charles of the party. My first inquiry was after the welfare of Charlotte and found that every member of our establishment was well and comfortable. Our three youngest were at once on my knee and almost unnerved me with their inquiries and caresses. Martha was particularly inquisitive about Augustin. I forgot myself and told her that he *enquired* after her. What says she *can he talk?* It is worth going from home to enjoy the comfort of returning. I found all things in order. You must enjoy yourself all you can but on Saturday we shall want you. Mrs. Johannot is better. I have not seen them but shall this afternoon. Mrs. Jackson's death is confirmed. We have no news of any kind. Our plants are all flourishing at our windows and we are entirely free of frost. Mr. Coit enquired after us on Sunday of Susan. Three of our family, Susan,

Celia and Harriet went to church all day and George Nichols with them in the afternoon. He has gone today to Cambridge . . .

"Yours affectionate
J.W.T."

By the time he graduated from Harvard George was considered definitely a member of the Treadwell family, and two full and affectionate letters from Susan's parents, written evidently at Susan's request to her parents and his "parents-to-be," are indicative of the trust and affection in which Susan's fiance was held by them. He certainly provided a contrast to their own son John. The following interesting letter was probably written by young John Treadwell while at Harvard; it emanates from Cambridge and shows the young man to have been in a state of revolt against the maxims and beliefs in which he had been raised:

"Cambridge August 23d

"My dear father

I address this note to you as this is a subject which does not concern any other member of the family, and that is church affairs. Your first question I suppose will be how I liked your high church on Sunday, to which I reply there is nothing I can understand, about all the services are in Latin, except the sermon, and that was very good, it was by the Bishop, he is a fine looking man, and I admired him. But I do not like the dress, especially the mitre, it looks much like a soldiers cap. What is the use of all this finery? I have made up my mind not to join your high church, don't be troubled about it, you will have enough to fill your church, I have no doubt. It really seemed good in the afternoon to attend my own place of worship . . . Would that I could prevail upon you to extinguish all your high church notions, and go hand in hand with me."

In a letter from John Nichols to his brother George, Jr. we have this account of young Treadwell:

"Salem, March 19, 1829

"Dear Brother,

We received news from John W. Treadwell, Jr. by Cousin Ropes Leach who arrived here last Sunday. He says he saw the captain with whom J.W.T. sailed and was requested by him to tell Mr. T. that John went ashore in S. America (I don't remember where) and

that he had never seen him since. We have no particulars as yet, the news will not probably be communicated to the rest of the family till today . . .

"There is nothing new of importance except accounts of shipwrecks and piracies, the losses have been very heavy upon some of our offices, the Mercantile S. W. Co. in one week received accounts of the loss of $35,000. The vessel in which Capt. Hart of this town sailed has been captured by pirates, and there is doubt all the crew were murdered. Four other cases of piracy have been reported, vessels unknown.

"We attempted yesterday the sale of Col. Pickering's estate in Warren Street but without success. Tomorrow we shall sell the furniture.

"I wish very much to call at Mr. Treadwell's but am afraid of intruding at this time. Mr. T. I understood was a good deal agitated on hearing of John, and I think it doubtful if he ever returns to this country . . .

"Lydia has received proposals from Miss Betsy Oliver to take her school for three months. She appears very much pleased with her prospects. She has engaged one scholar, and has partly engaged more. She commences her school keeping today. Grandfather is so much interested in this business that he has been all over town to get a pair of spectacles for Lydia, and is determined to get a pair.

"When it is convenient I should be pleased to receive a letter.

"Your affectionate brother
Jno. H. Nichols"

There is no further mention in family records or letters of young John Treadwell who probably never returned from his landing in South America.

John White Treadwell died in Salem, Massachusetts, on April 4, 1857. He had a long and active life but in his last years he knew a serious depression of spirit. Partly, no doubt, this was because of the unhappiness which he had suffered in losing his son and namesake John White Treadwell, Jr., so tragically in youth. Now he referred often to leaving no namesake behind him — not only no son of his own, but no other child in the family named for him. He made a touching appeal to his devoted daughter that she should give his name to her young son, the last of her children, who was born on

October 30, 1852. In spite of her devotion to her father Susan was greatly troubled by this request, since she and her husband had always presumed that the Nichols name of George would be passed on by the son for whom they had waited so long.

That my father became the namesake of his Treadwell grandfather seemed rather to minimize the deep family tie than to enhance it. It was felt that my father, the long awaited son at the end of a line of six older sisters, should have carried on the name of George, borne by both father and grandfather.

The first George Nichols, be it said, was at the time of my father's birth in 1852 retired from the sea, but still a vigorous older man living out his days in happy improvement of the garden and old family homestead in Salem. But Grandfather Treadwell was in his last illness, beseiged by gout, and reflecting unhappily that "no child had ever been named for him." In this melancholy state he requested of his beloved daughter Susan to bestow his name on her long-awaited one and only son.

Susan could not refuse, although she often admitted to a certain hesitancy and reluctance. Afterward, superstitious and ever-emotional Susan always attributed a strange gray-haired "G" which appeared on the side of her son's dark head from his earliest youth (though to his dying day he had no other gray in his hair) to the "misnomer."

Whether there was anything to Susan's superstition or not, John White Treadwell Nichols saw to it that in the course of time his eldest son should bear the name George; he bestowed on his next son his own name and that of his distinguished maternal grandfather John Treadwell. Nevertheless a strange coincidence followed. Not only was this latest George Nichols born with a natural genius for all pertaining to the sea, with a talent for naval architecture and sail design even in his own day of steam, but also, this George inherited white hair in his early thirties! Some ghostly remembrance seems to have persisted, for the hair in George's line has turned white early, — just as the line has had a genius for the world of ships and canvas.

In the first years of the Civil War Susan made a trip to New York to visit her friends Mr. and Mrs. Ireland, taking with her her ten-year-old son John:

"Friday A.M. Oct. 31, '62

"My dearest husband,

I am mortified to remember what shabby looking letters I have sent to you trying alike to your eyes and patience, but I have never realized what *crowded* life was before. Not one of my own dear ones at home, however, is crowded out of my mind and wherever I go and whatever I see my first feeling is that you, my own, should know all about it . . . yesterday at breakfast the first discussion was as to how we should best improve it and leaving for duller and more uncertain days nearer objects of interest, it was decided *that day* was made for Greenwood and Staten Island! Much as N.Y. contains of interest you perceive the kindness of our best friends scorns all near city limits. So soon after 9 o'clock Mr. and Mrs. I., Mamie, Gracie, John and I started for Brooklyn, took a car to the ferry — a short sail across — a walk through the most aristocratic and stately streets from which we have a magnificent water prospect — take then a Greenwood (a large Long Island cemetery) car where Mr. I. left us. After 15 min. ride we reached the cemetery and Mrs. I. took a carriage for an hour and a half, that we could drive around to see everything attractive.

"The cemetery covers 500 acres and is Mt. Auburn multiplied and surpassed in every way. We returned to N.Y. by a different route in car and ferry, and passing a short distance entered a Staten Island boat at 5 o'clock. I must premise that all our pockets were laden, before we left home, with crackers, small and great, and fruit baskets met us constantly by the way. We perceived in the cars coming to N.Y. that man is truly an "eating animal," for really the jaw of the cud-chewing cow does not move more constantly than all the jaws were working then . . . Miss Vose was as kind as possible and had the 'blessing' of a bottle of cologne which revived John once or twice when he was almost faint from the bad air of the car, and weariness.

"Well, to go back, or rather to move on — the sail to Staten Island was superb. The atmosphere golden, June-like — not even the Indian summer haze — the whole bay covered with vessels and gay boats, and as we touched at the island at 2 or 3 points the change of passengers interested us who remained on the boat until its return to the city. The foliage everywhere else had been brilliant, here owing perhaps to the salt atmosphere it had retained its richest verdure, and I could hardly believe that winter is so near. John was especially

interested in many soldiers with various uniforms, particularly one poor deserter who was handcuffed.

"We reached home at about 5 and 1/2 P.M. found cards of several callers . . . Oscar wanted to carry John to some place of amusement being his birthday, — but I thought he had had as much enjoyment as he could in one day. We had a good sleep and wake to find another bright and sunny day . . . After breakfast Mr. Ireland has been giving us an account of the Union meeting and enthusiastic speeches of last evening . . . We start at 10 and 1/4 for a car to the Haarlem River to go to 'High Bridge' over which the Croton is carried to N.Y. and under which four-rigged vessels sail! All these trips *cost me not a cent!* I shall buy *both sardine and olive forks!* I never can tell how much they all do for me. Please send a barrel of apples to Kitty by ex. — one-third Baldwins, one-third Greens, one-third Cat-Heads — *these on top.* They say what we have done for her pays for all — We *know* it cannot. Mr. Ireland feels very much as you do about McLellan's tardiness, only a *little worser* regarding him as a pro-slavery man — Mr. I's strong test.

"Mr. I. waited on us to the ferry slip at 10. We started at 11 for Haarlem, took another boat there for 'High Bridge' a stupendous product of man's skill, over which the Croton comes dancing in to the City of New York, bringing its reviving treasure to every household there. These sails give one a definite idea of the *extent* of the city and its grand arrangements for the sick, the poor, and the *wicked* too. We had had calls from some of Mrs. I's friends. and invitation to dine at Dr. Bellows today at 4 and 1/2 P.M. which we shall accept. Appleton Sturgis also was here, inquired for you, dear Lily, today All Saints I shall go to Trinity and returning keep quiet until 4. Another magnificent day, the *fifth!* John is shooting some bean to a family of hens in the next yard. It seems strange to be awaked by their crowing in the morning . . . Mr. I. read to us at the table extracts from Wadsworth's speech and Folger's . . . We are going to return Mrs. Ballestire's call at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on our way to the Bellows. Mr. I. will take this to the office and says you will not receive it until Monday A.M. You will excuse all haste, but I can't help writing. I want so that you should enjoy all with me. *Best, best* love to all.

"Your own Susan"

A primarily social person, Susan was also interested in herself; on December 17, 1878, entering on her 68th year, she wrote: "I have a few moments to myself which has been a rare luxury the last three months, even then I was interrupted, and now, my 68th birthday, I open this old book with regret at the failure of my oft revived resolution to write every day . . ."

Although Susan had the talent, it is clear that she never had the discipline to become a writer; she was a "spectator" and a sympathetic one. We find no criticism of her own family or others in her personal letters or diaries and the mirror which she holds up to them is one of entire trust and approval.

Susan had a natural and discerning pride in her grandchildren, and wrote of them in their young childhood: "John came over today with his precious son, George Nichols, who I truly hope will honor his grandfather's name. He is an attractive boy, and for the first time without his mother's care behaved beautifully, giving no trouble to anyone, and so docile and considerate of his papa's new care and of what his mama would wish him to do . . . And now I am working on a quilt for my dear little granddaughter made of bits of otherwise useless bright silks, and to be given her with the hope that she will cure herself of sucking her thumb."

Susan's reading surprisingly varied and catholic, revealed a lively interest and quick association of thought. That she, a lifelong and apparently conventional Episcopalian, should be interested in other types and facets of religion is somewhat surprising; yet we have her word: "I am reading with great delight *History of Jewish Church* . . . as if the characters of the Old Testament were not just such flesh and blood as ourselves . . ." And again her comment in 1875, "Science and Religion will soon shake hands if left alone . . ."

She also had interest in science and its growing role in life. Her alert curiosity and concern in this is reflected over and over again in her impressions of the books read: "I have been reading in the Edinburgh Review a work on Vision by Professor Helmholter and treatise on its preservation by Robert Brudemell Carter stating that opthalamic science had wonderfully advanced within a period of years." (The physique of the eye and its component parts are at this point described at some length, and in great wonderment by Susan.) She next read *The Scotch Naturalist,* "an interesting, interesting work!"

In June 1874 we find Susan interested in *Garden Experiments* and *Silk-Worm Culture* . . .

Susan's social life, informal, warm and neighborly, in the village of Cambridge, was indeed a source of true contentment. She endowed her neighbors, as her letters, with a warm interest and emotion as — "have been reading the *Memoirs of Ole Bull,* wishing I had taken advantage of my opportunities to make his acquaintance when he lived in Lowell's residence in Cambridge." Again, "the visitors from New York . . . were delighted with their visits on my friends here . . . and thought the unconventional way in which I procured such pleasures was a charming feature of life in Cambridge . . . and I did not tell them that it was probably an exceptional experience . . . as I am aware of my own independent way . . ."

"I have read the autobiography of Orville Dewey, a Unitarian Clergyman of great reputation whom my husband and I heard preach in New York in 1838, the only time we were in that city together, little anticipating that it would be the future home of two of my daughters, and at last of my dear son, who, when twelve years old accompanied me on a visit there."

Susan's close and emotional interest in her own family and her intimate friends, her absorption in her own interesting self and thoughts, revealed by excursions far afield in her reading and her "Religion" filled her days and made her a happy and contented woman.

It is quite plain to see that she "caught" her intellectual interest from her husband, a truly intellectual man. After his death she writes: "I have been treated with the privilege to secure books from the Harvard Library on account of my dear husband, etc."

On the whole it is as though her inroad into the world of science and intellect were frightening although interesting. She returns to the mystic and religious in her reading and thought. In the "Diary of a Contented Woman" she comments "What made her so happy in disposition, contented all her life? Her reliance on God, the Father, and Faith in Him."

Seven children were born to Susan and her husband: six girls, Susan, Sarah, Sarah Peirce, Harriet Farley, Elizabeth Peirce (Lilly), Lucy and Mary, and at the end John White Treadwell Nichols, born October 30, 1852. The daughters are all spoken of in the family letters as "most interesting, attractive, handsome and pretty girls and with their mother Susan's charm." In later life they became interest-

ing individual women. The oldest, Susan, had a distinguished public career as the first Dean of Women in New York's Cooper Union.

The son married in 1876 Mary Blake Slocum of Boston and Jamaica Plain, and the couple had six children, all of whom grew to maturity, and of whom the author and compiler was one. The oldest son of the family re-established the name George and his son and grandson today carry the name. John White Treadwell Nichols was engaged in business in New York City for most of his career and was for many years a partner in the firm, Minot Hooper & Co. However, he kept a close and lifelong interest in the family in both Cambridge and Salem. He was partly responsible for the donation of the Peirce-Nichols family home at 80 Federal St., Salem, to the Essex Institute.

Even as the first recorded thoughts and words of Susan Treadwell were concerned with her "Religion," so her final, forcefully written words end on the same religious note:

"I have, during the last fortnight, allowed myself the privilege of reading the two volumes of my dear husband's Journals,* from his early youth, in July 1823, in his school, in college, in his study of the profession and final settlement in 1831 as minister of a Unitarian Congregation & Instructor of Mr. Huidekoper's children in Meadville, Penn. I have read of his struggles & I may say sufferings there from the feeling that he had made a mistake in the choice of a Profession, led thereto by his loved and venerated mother's desire, but at last convinced himself that, although educated to be a critic of the writings of others, he had an invincible distaste for composing himself & a vocation which required the constant performance of this duty so wore upon his general health & nervous constitution as to make him very unhappy & determined to seek some other occupation. He was in a certain way successful as a Pastor & secured many warm friends in Meadville, who parted from him with many expressions of regret, & he felt that the trial of his profession had been made under very favorable circumstances, but I am confident that he never regretted relinquishing it for an occupation which had no special drawback; his standard for composition was a very high one & as his health was good & his life according to his taste, he became a most useful and

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*These volumes in manuscript form are the property of Dr. George Nichols, Jr., and were placed in custody of the Essex Institute.

happy man. He spent a few months after his return from Meadville duly considering plans for his future life, was married in Oct. 1834, six years after our engagement, but was a constant worker & I think never again kept any Journal. I lovingly commend the example portrayed in these two volumes to our dear children and grandchildren, & trust they will be guided by its influence, & we shall all meet, a happy family in Heaven."

Treadwell Notes

John White Treadwell, born in Ipswich, July 1785, died in Salem 1857, Cashier and President Merchants' Bank.

The only Treadwell Captain I can discover is Captain Charles Treadwell, born Ipswich 1789.

Lieutenant Privateer on the Alfred.*

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*The Essex Institute has a "log" of the Privateer Alfred. (M — 656 — 1812A)

XII

JOHN HENRY AND THE CIVIL WAR

JOHN NICHOLS 2ND, named in memory of his father George's beloved older brother, who died so tragically in the West Indies in 1798, was born just thirteen years later at the home of his parents, George and Sally Nichols in Salem, on June 12, 1811.

And so another John is added to the family — but "what's in a name?" And yet this second John, born several decades after his uncle, certainly appears to have inherited definite traits of character; he was self-effacing, modest, more than patient, appearing even to welcome the tiresome, meticulous details of accounting and bookkeeping in the office on the dock, quite willing to sit and work at home, allowing the exciting adventure to fall to others. The entire life of this second John appears to have been one of devotion to his family and to his work, and at the last an entire sacrifice to his own high ideals and to the need of his country.

Mention of John Nichols as a baby occurs in a letter from his sister Lydia sent him in greeting on his seventy-seventh birthday: "Will our dear brother please accept this trifling gift from his three sisters . . . I wish we had the pretty little pink calico dress and the white crochet cap which he wore with his little black curls hanging beneath his cap the first time I took him out to walk, when he would have been only about three years old . . ."

Young John is also mentioned on his thirteenth birthday in the diary of his older brother George:

"1824-12 June: John's birthday today — 13 years . . . After breakfast went with John to the wharf where we took passage in the *Caravan** . . . arrived on board the *Herald* which was then ready for Sea . . . after a short sail we left her, bidding adieu to our friends Brown and Ropes, and giving them our best wishes for a prosperous voyage to Havana, and as a safe return home.

"On the return of *us* who were in the first boat, John was very venturesome, and wishing to make a display of his courage bestrode a small rope that runs up from the stern, and notwithstanding our utmost endeavors, obstinately persisted in that dangerous situation —

*Crowninshield owned

at times throwing his leg into the air as tho' to excite the admiration of those present. The consequences as might be expected, that he slipped, and unless some kind Providence had stayed his fall must inevitably have found his grave in the Ocean, as the boat was sailing very rapidly, and he was unable to swim in the least."

In reading of this exploit I am reminded of a favorite story of my father concerning his uncle John. At the time of the Civil War, on a hurried trip from New York to Washington, he arrived at the Ferry just as it had pulled out; but, nothing daunted, he made a rush for it and taking a terrific leap, landed on the afterdeck with such speed and momentum that he had to steady himself by throwing his arm about one of the stern pillars, where he twirled a number of times. When his momentum slowed, he took a large hunk of gingerbread, his lunch for the trip, from his coat pocket and calmly munched it to the delighted amusement of his onlookers.

John's cousin and boyhood chum, Joseph Ropes, in his reminiscent letters recreated much of his own and John's youthful days. In a letter to John, written in the year 1883 when both men would have been in their seventies, Joseph said:

"I write to acknowledge . . . the fine photograph of yourself you have sent me. I am glad in looking at it to find that you retain so much of youthful vigor, and characteristic expression as to remind me strongly of our early days. We have both, I think, been remarkably favored with health during our long life, which surely is a cause for gratitude that we cannot appreciate too highly."

A charming letter from Joseph to John containing vivid reminiscences of John's boyhood:

"Salem Jany 24/83

"Dear Farmer John

The receipt of your letter of the 20th inst brought up so many pleasant memories of our boyhood, that I feel like lingering among them for awhile, and enjoying them over again. Those days seem very happy ones to me, as I recall them. I think you did not care much for play, and we did not play much together, but you were always doing something useful that interested me quite as much. I remember your bookbinding, for instance, and your gardening, though I could not aid you in either of them, but I could and did in putting in

the winter's wood and piling it so that not a stick projected beyond the rest. This was as good as play — Then how nice it was to have our bowl of bread and milk together in that little room at the entrance to the cellar, or to go to the unfinished chamber, where two or three times we *did* the "anthenished chamber", which long puzzled me to tell its meaning. — I guess you enjoyed smoking for you bought cigars by the box, for George & yourself — You once tempted me to try one. I did so, and was made sick by it. It was my first and last attempt at smoking. Do you remember how we bagged the cats, and drowned them in the river? and how we chased the runaway calf up Green St. and I caught him by his extended tail, and had a long & strong pull, till you headed him off & captured him?

"The greatest of our adventures was when we "went a Maying" to Cambridge. I can't forget that day's walk, and how footsore & weary we were in coming back. From the toll house home was the longest mile I ever walked. But it was something to boast of afterwards, that when boys, we walked about 40 miles in a day — I think we didn't walk much the next day.

"In one respect we were alike — we were both good natured, and not disposed to make trouble for others, nor to be much troubled ourselves about little things. There was good philosophy in your common saying when anything went wrong.

" 'Never mind, never mind, do better next time.' This is still a good motto unless you have got beyond the need of it.

"I have recalled of course but very few of the things we did when together, and may add to them the many quiet hours which have left a pleasant impression, when we did nothing we were likely to remember.

"Since those early days outward influences may have seemed to have drawn us apart, yet if we could *get directly* at *each other,* we might find that we were still united by the same, or a stronger bond of union."

Again a reminiscent account from Joseph sheds light on the interests and occupations of school boys of the 1820's:

"When about fourteen years of age, in company with two cousins, both younger than myself, I planned a morning May-Day walk on the Salem Turnpike — having many times previously made excursions

with them in Summer to berry pastures a few miles distant from my home.

"The peculiar charm of a May-Day tramp consisted in an early start. So without waiting for breakfast we left our beds in season to admit of walking some five or six miles before 7 o'clock as it was necessary for my cousins to be ready for school at eight. — I being favored with a holiday was not particularly anxious to be at home so soon.

"On we tramped until Houting Bridge came in sight, and thinking it but a short distance beyond to the Lynn Hotel we deemed it best to go there before our return; for the purpose of ascertaining the time of day. — On reaching the Hotel we found it too late to reach home in season for School and therefore concluded to go in for a good time — it always having been my maxim that it was as well to be hung for a sheep as a lamb, so on we trudged, resolved to see the half way house, in order that it might be in our power to say we had walked as far as from Salem to Boston. — Arrived at the half way house our appetites reminded us that we had fasted since the evening previous, and fortunately for us I had long before acquired the habit of providing ample stock of eatables for every emergency, even for recess at School — on one occasion, the teacher discovering that I was breaking the rules of eating ordered me to deposit on his desk the forbidden fruit which formed such a pile that he remarked that it was enough to victual a ship. — After partaking of our repast and being refreshed thereby we concluded to lengthen our walk to the top of the hill beyond the marshes, and not being fatigued on our arrival there it seemed advisable to ascend the next hill which we foolishly imagined would command a distant view of the City of Boston, but of course were doomed to be disappointed in that respect — However not being dismayed we strode manfully forward and after a weary walk our eyes were gladdened by a sight of the promised land. — The idea of returning home without visiting the City now that we were so near it, was not to be entertained; but money was needed for the toll at Charlestown bridges, which under ordinary circumstances I should have been unable to supply, on this occasion however I was supplied with a quarter which my father had given me a few days before to pay the dentist for extracting an offending tooth, but which I had concluded to keep for a more pressing exigency, and that had then arrived. — So after many adventures, having been pelted with stones by the Charlestown Hogs,

as they were then called, who doubtless considered us as a trio of vagabonds as our forlorn appearance would have justified them in doing, we finally reached the house of a relation of my cousins, a member of whose family was on the point of starting for Salem, and who on arrival there proclaimed that we were in Boston, and would not return until the next day. Such however was not our intention, but it being then not later than eleven o'clock I thought it would be a great breach of fraternal regard for me to go home without seeing my brother who had entered college the year previous, so my elder cousin accompanied me to Cambridge, after having ascertained from a particularly dignified and very precise old aunt of mine who I called for information, the right direction. — Our reception in Massachusetts Hall I am sorry to say was not as gracious as I could have desired — my brother doubtless not considering it a high honor to be visited by a couple of boys as shabbily dressed as we then were; however he condescended to encumber me with a heavy parcel to carry home beside, some copies of a book which I knew were not to be obtained in Salem. After *resting* for a while we turned our faces toward Boston, and in order to husband our strength as far as possible for the long walk before us, we availed ourselves of the opportunity to ride gratis behind a vehicle, but had scarcely taken our seats when my companion suddenly jumped off and ran away, much to my surprise, but I of course followed suit and hastily too for we had been detected in our trespass and the driver had stopped his horses, with the intention of giving us a merited horse whipping. On being asked why I had been guilty of such an outrage I pointed to my cousin, as the culprit and thus escaped punishment. — This rebuff did not deter us, however, from a second attempt to steal a march on some other traveller, but again the intention was frustrated by a cane in the road which some unlucky gentleman had lost, the sight of which by my cousin induced him to forego the pleasure of a free ride. Arrived in Boston we found that our young friend had improved the time while we were away in seeing the wonders of that renowned city, foremost among which was the survail from the top of the State House — After partaking of a substantial dinner, delicious as may well be supposed to three school boys who had walked some twenty five miles, we announced our intention of returning to Salem, and no entreaties availed to induce us to abandon our project . . ."

In 1826 when John was fifteen years old his father George failed in his business of shipping interests, the failure involving also John's grandfathers Jerathmiel Peirce and Ichabod Nichols. John must have grown up in an atmosphere of discussion and anxiety about the decline of the shipping industry. From his father, a man respected highly for his absolute integrity, he received a heritage which lasted throughout his life. His own "penury" came from this poverty which had descended on his family and was nurtured through the lean years by his employment as clerk and accountant in the new business of auctioneering. In turn, John's clerk-like meticulousness for detail becomes manifest in the family letters of this period.

In 1826 John's sister writing to her brother George says, "I am sending you . . . these lines John ruled."

John's mother in a letter to her daughter Sarah, includes this P.S.:

"Your father wishes George to apply to Aunt Peirce for money and he will repay her when he comes up," and this is signed, "A true copy of record, Attest: John Nichols, Clerk."

In 1827 John had left school and his father mentions in a letter to a daughter, "John continues in the store with me . . ." and there John continued with his father for many years.

By March of 1829 things looked a bit better at home in Salem. John's sister Lydia writes:

"Uncle has made me two very handsome lace frames . . . one is of boxwood and ivory . . . which I must thank John for in particular, as he furnished the materials which were very expensive."

At this time John and his Uncle Henry, referred to by Lydia, were great friends, a friendship which lasted all their lives, and his sister continues with her letter:

"Uncle and John stayed at the stove, on one or two very stormy days, and cooked sausages in a shovel, they both eat out of one dish; Uncle had a pen knife and a pair of dividers for a fork, and John had a case knife and sail needle."

We may note that Henry was at this time a young widower, through the death of his first wife Sarah Hardy in 1826; and undoubtedly, being a widower and without children, he was a lonely young man, and the attachment of his nephew John seems to have followed natur-

ally, and to have been a great solace. It is further interesting to note that his nephew John had received the single name of "John" from his parents at birth and remained unchristened by the church until in his teens when he was given a church christening at his own behest so that the name Henry might be added officially as a middle name.

John's somewhat shy and surprising humor is evidenced in his early letters to his brother George at Harvard, who had requested John to "keep an eye on" his intended, the gay young Susan Treadwell of Salem. John's reports on young Susan to his serious and lovelorn older brother during this period are filled with humorous teasing.

John was known for his humor and also the playing of practical jokes as he grew older. There is a strange letter preserved in the family collection, as the date of the letterhead is startling. However, on careful examination the date is found to be inaccurately written for that period, and a number of other minor inaccuracies definitely stamp the letter as a "fake." The handwriting is similar to that of John Henry Nichols. This form of practical joking was quite the fashion in John's young manhood:

"Nov. 2d 3d Mo 1629

"There has been a hellish sect latelye risen uppe amongst us which I am afraide may doo considerable mischiefe to the true followers of oure Lord unlease some things bee done in season to prevent itt. I referre to that wicked denominatione called Quakers, we have by orders of our Excellente John Endecott (Collonell) committed foure of them to prison—there theye are to remaine some months. I think they ought to be burned for their heresey. Youres in the wayes of the rightousness.

"Francis Higinson

"Rev. Hugh Peters
London"

Just when this letter was written by John is not evident. As his own religious views were always most liberal, it would seem that he used this vehicle to express his scorn for what he would have considered the ridiculous religious persecution. The following is evidently composed by John himself as caricature of a farm-hand's letter:

"Northfields 25, Dec. - 1850

"Dear Sirrh,

The pigs is well & the cows is well and the children bobbish

"James Mohoney, sinds his best respects to you
"Patrick Flannegan, sinds his best respects to you
"John Milligan, sinds his best respects to you
"John McGlue sinds his best respects to you
"David Hardin sends his best respects to you
"Mary Lumpken sends her best respects to you
"Sarah Burns sends her best respects to you
"Catharine Macarty sends her best respects to you
"Michael Murphy sends his best respects to you
"The Praist sends his best respects to you

"I hope you are well, as I am at prisint enjoying that blessing. Patrick Clark's hoss has got a koff. Long life to yer honour, & be the blessing of the Virgin upon you & all the saints including, Matthew Mark, Luke & John & the acts. not forgetting Saint Patrick who druv all the snakes out of Ireland. So no more at present from your friend

"Shiner Shahane

"P.S. Mary Shahane sinds her best respects to you.
James Connoway sends his best respects to you."

NOTE: Address written lengthwise on outside of sheet as follows:

" In care of Mister
Washington Verrey
for John H. Nichols
Esquire, Salum
Mas
& when you rite
Sind to S. Shahane
Northfields. "

On May 29, 1835, there was a notice in the *Salem Observer* of "the marriage by the Reverend Mr. Brazier of Mr. John H. Nichols to Miss Sarah Augusta Leach." This was the beginning for John of a life-long devotion to his wife and children; it was the beginning also of intense personal sorrow with intervals of tranquil contentment. For from 1840 on, when his first son, John Henry died "of the fever," until 1856 child after child lived a few years, one boy to the age of sixteen when his death seemed harder to bear.

John's wife, and the children's mother, gradually declined in health, probably as the result of her frustrating sorrow, and was obliged even

as a young woman to be often undergoing rest or treatment in a sanitorium. John, however, continued throughout essentially the same person. His warm and deep attachment to each member of his family throughout all personal hardship, and his devotion to his business of auctioneering and accounting as his father George's partner and chief help meet, filled his days. Throughout we get in his letters the persistent cheerful flash of boyish humor.

John Nichols' nature retained a very childlike quality; and it is perhaps to this quality in the father John that we owe the frequent and most understanding letters which he wrote to and received from all his children.

Perhaps, just because of so much which was the eternal child and boy in his own nature, father John's devotion for the little boys of his family is particularly deep and touching, and these in turn, appear to remain the "Eternal Children" of the family chronicle.

A few of the little boys' letters are entirely happy and natural, even ecstatic on "visiting Uncle Charles at Bethel", milking the cows—looking to the mountains which are "very near." Young George wishes that their visit to the farm in Vermont might be prolonged, but their mother appears ever most anxious concerning the children's absence from home. Father John at home in Salem, on the other hand, writes cheerfully of the homely home details of news. So on July 17, '54:

"Dear George: . . . Should the respberries ripen before you return we will see that they are gathered and sold, so that you need not return on account of them. . ."

And little Charlie, the younger brother, who was only to live a year or two longer, wrote home to the older sister Lizzie or Peircie, as she was afterward called:

"Dear Lizzie: I am very glad you wrote me a letter. I sleep with George now.

Good bye and good love,
Charlie"

And George, with his ever-ready humor comments "Charlie has written a letter to Lizzie, and *he* seems quite delighted with it."

A little letter from Father John in mid-summer Salem to his children in Vermont follows:

"My dear children
I suppose that you are enjoying yourselves in Paradise — but I should pity you if the weather is as hot where you are as it is here today . . ."

From the age of five on, little George Ropes Nichols, who lived to the age of sixteen, was a most thoughtful and affectionate child. There is in the family collection one entire portfolio containing only his letters to his parents, and theirs to him. George followed in thought his father away on a trip to New York: "Dear Father — I suppose you arrived at New York this morning. I heard by Uncle Charles that you did not succeed getting state rooms by the Fore River, or Stonington route . . ." and there is much news added to this little letter and much characteristic anxiety expressed for "grandma, who is very sick."

Again, there is another letter captioned "George and his mother to the Children '55:

"My dear Children:
Your mother wishes me to write you a few lines. But as my eyes are very weak, one of them particularly, I must write accordingly . . . Excuse the writing, as I can hardly see anything.

Yours truly,
George R. Nichols, Esq."

We have a mature letter from George to his sister Lizzie written some years later when he was on a trip to New York with his father:

"Dear Lizzie:
We arrived at New York at four o'clock, there was one tunnel that we went through that was about a mile long. We went to the Great Nicholas Hotel where we had a splendid room, very handsome lace curtains; A splendid sink with water brought up into our room. An arch for the bedstead, and lace curtains over the arch, and a handsome gas chandelier, and most magnificant bedbugs. Father and Mother each killed one. Yesterday I had for dinner Roast Turkey, Charlotte de Marcaronii a la cream, Mashed Potatoes, Green Peas, Cherry Pie, vanilla ice-cream, oranges, cherries and strawberries . . . There appeared to be a fire over in some building about a mile and a half from Aunt Mary's, but it proved to be a lumber and coal yard. The amount of property destroyed is stated to be $300,000, but I think it is very much overestimated . . .

"New York, Tuesday

"George commenced writing this letter, but was prevented closing it yesterday as we went immediately after dinner to see Mr. Crombie . .

Your affectionate father,

J. H. Nichols"

Just when young George became ill or had his definite premonition of death is not apparent from any date given on a strange document enclosed in the same portfolio as his letters:

"*My will* is that when I die my coins shall be given to Charles, and my minerals shall be kept as curiosities in the family, My cabinet shall be given to the girls, and some of my old clothes shall be distributed among the poor. My three fruit trees I wish Grandpa to have, as he is much interested in such things. The Nichols Coat of Arms I wish to have returned to Grandpapa, likewise these Buttons. I should like to have Grandmama have my Bible if you are willing."

After George's death it seems that his grief-stricken mother resorted to spiritual communications, and in these reverted to the period of George's young childhood. These "spiritual messages," written down by a strange or "guided" hand, are the only letters of this kind in the family collection, although spiritualism was beginning to attract wide attention in the mid-nineteenth century. One of these little messages follows:

"How dearly was I loved by my mother. Her spirit seems crushed at times, and still I cannot write with her — I cannot understand why this is. Her heart holds converse often, but her hand I cannot guide. Shall I ask you to let her see this. She wishes to be convinced. She would gladly be assured of what she feels to be true. Her soul warms towards all good and pure spirits, and would draw from them words of spiritual strength —

George"

There is a note attached to this writing "Communication from George through his Aunt Martha."

Of a piece with a spiritual message we find a homely little poem entitled.

"Little George's Call"

I come, my dear Grandpa

With my garland so bright
To welcome you in
To a beautiful sight . . . . ."
And so on in childish printing . . . .

From the year 1860 on, when stirrings of the Civil War (soon to break out in earnest) were calling to New Englanders to leave their homeland and journey South or West, the John Nichols family established in New York. Certainly New York provided the inevitably larger horizon and opportunity for John's war service.

But in the intervals of New York involvements John and his daughters kept up their attachment to "old Salem," writing frequently to the maiden aunts in the old homestead on Federal Street, returning on visits to their own home and garden on Chestnut Street, the homelike four-square brick house built in 1815 by John's father, Captain George and later bought by John. In fact, John in New York, sighed at times for the "cozy parlor" at home in Salem, and one could almost hear his deep breath of relief on a Salem visit when he wrote to his family in New York, "Here I am again at the old stand on Washington Street," — the same insurance and brokerage office where his business career had begun.

The letters of the John H. Nichols family written during the Civil War are full of the local color of that stirring period; they may be quoted at random for interesting "news-bits." It was the Civil War Era in which the girls came to maturity and knew both the gaiety, the romance and the tragedy for the young. Their correspondence is far too voluminous to quote in its entirety, and deserves a volume in itself; but I would believe that stray paragraphs, comments or descriptions scattered in as nearly as possible chronological order through this chapter can give a moving, often frivolous background to the sombre, humorous, tragic, but very human years of John Henry Nichols and his family.

Martha Nichols, John's daughter, wrote to her grandmother, Mrs. George Nichols in Salem:

"New York, Jan. 6, 1860

". . . New Year's Day is passed in a delightful manner. The gentlemen in New York all make calls on that day. The calls begin at half-past eleven in the morning, and they keep them up 'till ten at night . . . Saturday evening we are going with a Party to Central Park to skate.

The ladies here do not skate nearly so much as in Salem. There is a Pond at the Central Park expressly for ladies, and gentlemen are not allowed on it unless they have a lady with them . . ."

Father John appears to have been as much intrigued with all that was to be seen and done in this great City of New York as were his daughters, and wrote to his mother:

"My dear Mother —

On Friday we again went to New York for the purpose of shopping and sight-seeing. Visited the Park, Battery, Trinity Church, etc. The latter is the most magnificent structure I ever saw — The outside, as you already know, is of freestone, exquisitely wrought, and to my great surprise the sides of the interior are of the same material, and covered with the same care, and the ceiling overhead, which consists of arching throughout, likewise appears to be freestone — the floors are of a dark stone, but I should judge of an inferior quality. The pews, organ case, reading desks, and indeed all the woodwork is of a dark color, probably oak or black walnut, and handsomely carved. Augusta said she should admire to hear the tones of the organ, and just then such music was heard from it, as I never expect to hear again. The windows are all of stained glass, of the richest imaginable hues. Indeed it is impossible to give an adequate description of the beauty and grandeur of the church. I should suppose that almost every person *having eyes* would be so much engrossed with sightseeing as to derive but little benefit from the services . . . . . .

"I remain yours truly,
John Nichols"

A letter from Augusta to Peircie follows:

"Salem, Sunday Nov. 25/60

"Dear Bettie (Peircie)

I thought that we should get a great deal of news from Father about the doings in New York, but the principal information that I have derived from that source, is, that there is a possibility that you may spend the winter in your present quarters. Well! I don't care much, if you will only take Music lessons — and come home a splendid player as well as a splendid looking young lady — if there is no chance of your becoming such, I think that you had better return to the home of your childhood immediately. This is my opinion, follow it or not, as you please — if you stay I shall not have the trouble of teaching you,

neither shall I have the benefit — the two considerations about balance each other, so to conclude the subject, I repeat *I* don't care what you do.

"We went home just in time to prepare for the lecture for soldiers and welcome Father, who astonished us with an enormous bundle besides his usual luggage. Mr. Lumner had a crowded hall in prospect. We were able to repress our curiosity for a sight of its contents, till after the lecture when Father exhibited a quantity of mittens and three boxes of toys to our admiring eyes. I believe that Marnie was too much engrossed thinking of Mr. Lumner, to condescend to such childish things. My great mind could enjoy both and of course I liked Mr. Lumner.

"Yours truly
Augusta Nichols"

A letter from John's daughter Peircie, of this momentous time, is addressed to her mother, Augusta, and starts "with just one request from this daughter of yours, that she be allowed to become an army nurse" but the collection contains no reply from her mother, nor any indication that her request was granted.

And from Augusta to her Mother:

"December 9th/60

"Dear Mother

'Hard Times' is a very nice thing for *me,* this winter, of course every one will have to be economical and my old things will not look so shabby as if times were easy.

"When you read this, you can imagine at least one of us saying — 'tomorrow night, At candle light — Yes, that's the time they say, That — She'll be here, Our Mother dear, Now long she's been away — ' It's very much more than a week since on my cheek, She pressed the parting kiss — etc.

" 'But she will come, She'll be at home, Tomorrow night, and then I hope that she will never be, So long away again,' unless she will go to Europe and take us all with her.

"Your daughter
Augusta."

"Peircie," John Nichols' next eldest daughter, wrote to her grandmother in Salem from New York:

"New York, April 20, 1861

". . . Cousin Mary and I have just been to a political meeting in Union Square, an immense concourse of people, there seemed men enough there to carry on a War, we saw *the hero of the age,* Major Anderson, 4 times this afternoon, and once he was about 2 feet distant from us, so we could see him rather well. He is a small thin man, and looked quite pale, he was one of Mrs. Mitchell's groomsmen and she knows him very well . . .

. . . Arnold & Constable, the store where James (Agnes' brother) is in, have told their clerks that if they wish to volunteer, they will continue their salary while they are gone, and if they are killed will provide something for their family. Stewart and several of the other stores have done the same thing, yesterday Stewart had a silk flag costing $300 put on top of his store, and he has offered to loan the Government One Million Dollars . . . yesterday Agnes and I went to Broadway to see the Seventh Regiment off, we stood two hours waiting for it, the crowd was immense, the Regiment numbered a thousand but one refused to go, the reason he refused was because his child was very ill . . ."

Chatty young Lucy Nichols, the girls' Cambridge cousin, wrote to her cousin "Peircie" on May 1, 1861 just as the war was getting underway, "I was very much surprised to hear you had come home (on a Salem visit) for I had got so used to thinking of you in New York. I did not realize you lived in Salem . . . Our Arsenal here in Cambridge is guarded by a company of students, and all the most fassy young men. Luce and Lill went into the Arsenal the other day. Chauncey Parsons invited them, and they had a real fassy time . . . Probably Class Day will be given up, as Wendell Holmes has gone too, and so both the Class Orator and Poet have gone to the war . . . "

The four daughters of John Nichols, who were in the romantic age at the time of their removal from Salem to the great city, were admirably suited there. The three older daughters entered wholeheartedly into the patriotism as the gayeties of this war-time city, and they did not escape its tragedies. They stood for many hours on Broadway waving unknown soldiers off to the front, and each appeared to have her favorite soldier who for one reason or another did not return.

John Henry Nichols of Salem, New York, Washington and the Civil War led a rich and active life, and has left us a most rich and interesting record. John worked in close cooperation throughout these years with the U. S. Sanitary Commission for the relief of the suffering in the hospitals of the Union Army, and his personal benevolence extended at times south of the Mason-Dixon line. His important Civil War correspondence is too voluminous to quote, and may be only briefly referred to. (See Supplement)

Throughout the years of the great conflict, John Henry held no official position of importance, as he was beyond the age of active or sensational service. His name was hardly known beyond his native city of Salem. But in giving his thought, always sincere and original, his constant work and devotion, and all that he was able to spare from his material possessions, to alleviate the sufferings of his fellow countrymen, his accomplishments were enormous. His attitude is briefly expressed in a letter to Hon. Randall in Annapolis: "I feel that my contributions to the hospitals are altogether over-rated, since the greatest pecuniary sacrifices can bear no comparison with those made with any one of the myriads who have offered life and health in defense of their country. But as my age, defective sight, and other circumstances prevent me from active service in this terrible contest, I cannot withhold anything in my power to furnish toward the comfort of those who have suffered."

John's outstanding contribution to the war hospitals far and wide was brandy or other obtainable spirits, calculated by him, in the absence of anasthetics throughout the war hospitals to allay the most acute suffering of the wounded. And besides this merciful gift of case after case of brandy, sherry, port, he sent staples of all kinds — hospital supplies and clothing to friends or acquaintances or total strangers in the various parts of the Union, keeping his own careful account of where these were needed. There is letter after letter beginning in this vein: "I understand from the newspapers that there has been another battle . . . and supplies must be needed . . . I am sending by Farwell's Express from Boston . . ." The replies from nurses, matrons, chaplains and officers of the Sanitary Commission are of the utmost interest. These letters beside mirroring the desperate need in the care of the wounded tell of the appalling lack of government regulations in both

the hospitals and the army. The following letter is from Miss S. W. Tucker, Armory Square Hospital, Washington, July 23, '63:

"I have just received word from Chester Hospital that two cases had arrived there for me . . . I may return to Chester if I can find anyone to take my place here. Chester Hospital has over 900 very badly wounded, many of them Rebels, they are from the last Battle.

"I was asked if they could have the things you sent there, as they are much in want . . . Doctor Draper is perfectly reliable if they are given into his hands, but as a great proportion are Rebels I did not know how you might feel about it . . ."

And from John H. Nichols in Salem came a letter dated July 26, '63 to Miss Tucker, Washington:

". . . I certainly cannot object to the use of the articles referred to at the Chester Hospital, although in my contributions for the relief of the soldiers I should, of course, prefer to aid those who has suffered in our cause, but as the Rebels at Chester are in our hands, no one possessed of ordinary feelings of humanity can refuse to alleviate their sufferings . . ."

And from Miss Anne Lowell, Washington, July 10, '63:

". . . It (the port juice) has been invaluable — one boy's life has certainly been saved by it — he was not able to take any stimulant or any food — but after being persuaded to try this, he liked it — and has been kept alive by it ever since . . . we have no other wine or brandy in the hospital, but yours . . ."

From Mrs. L. B. Gray, West's Buildings Hospital, Baltimore, August 12, '64

". . . We have now a great many amputated limbs, and stimulants are very necessary. . . we have some wards full of Rebels, and I query whether it would be right to use any of your stimulants for them, and I have not fully decided whether it is my duty to take care of them — but I cannot see an enemy suffering without trying to help them and many have been won over to our side by kindness. Many have been conscripted for which they do not seem to be to blame."

Even Charlotte, John's eleven year old daughter, took her part in the war relief work and had her own correspondence; a letter from a soldier to her follows:

"My Dear Little Friend

"A little bag containing salt, sage, buttons, bread &c has been placed in my hands by the Mass. State Agent with the request that I would write a letter of thanks to the generous and patriotic 'little girl' who gave it. Being a Mass. Soldier I assure you I take great pleasure in doing so — all the articles contained in the bag will be faithfully distributed among the sick and wounded in my ward. In the first place let me tell you that I am a Ward Master in Campbell Hospital, Washington, and have opportunities to give a great many delicacies to the poor wounded soldiers in my ward, and rest assured I shall do so. The socks Mrs. Gaylord the wife of our chaplain tells me, you knit yourself & requested that they might be given to some soldier from Mass. I shall therefore wear them myself and shall always bear you in mind when I put them on and bless the while the gentle fingers that knit them. The songs I have distributed among the patients and I can already hear the voices of the Soldiers singing them in their beds. I understand you are from Salem it is not far from my place of residence in West Newbury. If I recollect aright a gentleman from Salem came through my Ward one Sabbath afternoon, by the name of Nichols perhaps he was your Father if so he should be proud of so patriotic a little daughter. I will not detain you longer but will close by returning my thanks for the bag and its contents. Persevere little girl in the generous work; every little helps, it is a little here and a little there that makes up the great mass of supplies which are consumed by the suffering soldiers, who follow in the wake of this terrible war. You are at home surrounded by luxuries sleeping upon your nice soft bed of feathers & know nothing of the hardships of soldiers who have no luxuries to alleviate the pangs of sickness & no bed but the hard ground no covering but the blue arch of Heaven throughout the long days and nights of a hard campaign. I must now bid you good bye and sign myself your friend.

Moses F. Carr
Campbell Hospital, Washington
June 9, 1864"

John Henry Nichols may justly be regarded as the Civil War Nichols, the one representative of this large family importantly involved in that historic conflict. In him the family vine may be said to turn directly and swiftly toward the very center of the North's patriotic endeavor and sacrifice.

The physical picture that John gives of himself at this time is that of a slight short man wearing heavy glasses for his extreme shortsightedness which troubled him all his life. By nature retiring and modest, devoted and self-sacrificing in his close family ties, refreshing and amusing in his own homely vein of humor, without any notable gifts, and handicapped by his physique. Yet in the depths of his nature, I discern such an unconquerable fire of patriotism, of rectitude, of almost fanatical devotion to principle, and an unhesitating courage in the face of adversity, that I sense in him a force and warmth by which thousands were sustained and benefitted.

John's eldest daughter Augusta received in Salem the following disturbing epistle from her friend Eliza Blunt writing from New York:

". . . We seldom go out in the evening except in companies of three or four. I suppose, of course, you have heard of the Garrotting System? Even ladies are not spared. I heard of a lady who was walking in New York about two o'clock P.M. when two men came up and told her if she spoke a word they would kill her. They then relieved her of a splendid fur cape and muff. Uncle George saw a lady take a revolver out of her muff, as she was arranging part of her dress. It is quite fashionable to go armed. A few weeks ago Willie was returning from the theatre quite late, and seeing a suspicious-looking man, he exposed his opera glass in such a manner that it resembled a pistol. The man took fright as well as flight . . ."

Again, Eliza writes to Augusta ". . . I think I'm a pretty fast young lady to have been bridesmaid twice before I am seventeen. They say I cannot be bridesmaid again without giving up all hope of having a wedding of my own. But, dear me! I don't care. I shall be bridesmaid whenever I'm invited, I do enjoy it so."

In July of 1860 Eliza wrote ". . . I have hardly had my pen dry since the 21st of April (the soldiers' departure.) It is a very little labor of love to write to the heroes who have gone to fight for us. O, Gussy! I always have had an admiration for great strength and courage, but it is more than I anticipated that Americans possessed them. They are splendid fellows, these Yankees. You have good cause to be proud of your State. Everyone I think must accord that it has saved the Union . . .

"Willie and Eddie (her brothers) have gone . . . They are now in Gen. Patterson's command, and probably will see some fighting before

they return . . . I have advised Eddie in the event of a collision, to adopt the fashion Grandpa's housekeeper says was in vogue at Big Bethel; 'All the men wore masked batteries so that they could not be seen' . . . Do you remember Ed Mitchell? He has obtained a first lieutenancy in the 16th Regiment of Infantry, Regular Army . . . The Garibaldi Guard are in Virginia on the road to Fairfax I think . . ." From a young lady-friend of John's daughters this letter:

"New York, April 25th, 1861

"My dear Lizzie,

I declare I am laboring under such an excitement that I can hardly write dear Cos so please excuse this large paper and all mistakes which you may find in it to begin with after you left, I rode down to church & staid making lint till ½ past 12 & then went home and dined & went to Van Wyck's, came home and Harry Hobart came over to get me to come to reading club, but I declined being altogether too 'blue', after he had gone, I went to Mitchells found Sue at home, and scraped lint till dinner time, Mrs. M. & Annie being still in Flushing and Mr. M. Sue & I spent the eve in the library. By & by, 9 o'clock, Ed Lewis came in inquired after you etc., gave me some gift which I intended to send to you as a souvenir of your devoted Lover but have lost it & will get you something better next letter. In the morning Edward K. came up to take me to Fort Hamilton, went with him to Custom House, & went over it with William, met his Papa, Mama, and brother of Capt. Doubleday, and was introduced to him (very handsome). Then took the boat, arrived in a short time at Fort Hamilton, and was introduced to Capt. Doubleday, who is perfectly magnificent, he walked around the fort with me explaining everything to me and told me everything about Fort Sumpter and the siege and on parting from him, I told him that I was happy at having the honor of being introduced to one of the heroes of Fort Sumpter and he modestly blushed & declared he only did his duty and also told me he perceived I was a very patriotic young lady. I also walked through a part of the fort with my arm in his, fine wasn't it.

"We had a good way to walk before we reached the cars so William and I ran like mad, and walked on top of stone walls and climbed a tree, and laughed his mama out of her stiffness, we then got into cars and made fun all the way and a lady kept looking at us so William pretended to be very much in love with me on purpose to make her stare . . ."

In August '61 Eliza Blunt writes to Augusta of her brothers' return home with their Regiment:

"Brooklyn, Aug. 11, '61

". . . We have passed through a great deal of excitement . . . consequent upon the return of the *boys*. There were numerous rumors of their approach, but I regarded them as totally unfounded until the day of their arrival, . . . Sister Sarah and I, with numerous friends, went over to the Howard House in Broadway, at nine o'clock, and there waited for *eleven hours,* supported by a few crackers. Of course, when the regiment did pass, Willie's whiskers were the only things that I could make out, for the darkness. One of the young ladies, whose brother was corporal of the Engineer Corps, provided herself with a bouquet for Eddie, so I did my best to aim one at the corporal, but the last thing I saw of my bouquet was its collision with a straw hat, while the young lady's reached the object of *my* aim. We were all so much excited that we nearly precipitated ourselves from the windows. The boys did not reach home until eleven o'clock, and found quite a multitude assembled to receive them. Eddie is very little sunburned, and is the possessor of quite a beard. All the sunburn is concentrated upon Willie's nose, and he is the happy wearer of a pair of startling English Whiskers, upon the strength of which he has entered the British Provinces (Montreal) to visit the lady he loves . . . I wish you could have seen the 12th Regiment mustered out of service last Monday. They formed a line of battle on Union Square reaching from 14th to 17th St. and then there was not sufficient room for the engineers. The regiment is splendidly drilled, and has a fine Colonel, who looks likes Napoleon I. I had the pleasure of meeting Willie's Captain who is a perfect marvel of beauty. The fact is, the only fault one can find with him is being beautiful, but Willie says even that fault disappears when he puts on civilian attire . . . George . . . has left the Garibaldi Guard, and accepted a majority in a cavalry regiment in Freemont's command. . . He has had a lieutenant colonelcy and majority in volunteer regiments, and first lieutenancy in the regular army offered him, but preferred to go into the Western Army division as cavalry major. He says his moustache-pointers are the cause of his being in such demand . . ."

A letter to Peircie in New York from Nellie King, Salem, Feb. 1st, 1862:

" . . . I should like to see you very much with your hair frizzled. Mary and I have given it up entirely we had a nice pair of crimpers and used them a few times, but Father said we resembled Negros altogether too much and said we never should use them again — Mary didn't because her hair is so light but mine is so black that I must confess I did resemble a pale contraband.

We have had some good concerts here this winter. Teresa Garreno gave two splendid ones, did you hear her in N.Y.? I never heard anything so perfectly wonderful. She played some of Thalberg's most difficult music the people were delighted with her, but as for me I am perfectly wild about her I went to both concerts and then to Boston and heard her with a full orchestra . . . I do think she is the most charming little thing I ever saw — she is so simple and childlike in every way . . . Mr. Downs says she is a second Mozart."

And Augusta Nichols, the girls' mother, received letters also from the "New York front" in her quiet home in Salem; on March 6th, 1862, her friend, Miss Ann Ashton wrote:

"My dear Friend,

. . . Mrs. J. H. Silsbee is here, she tells us that every female in Salem who can use a needle is working hard for Army or Navy. Dear old Salem, when were you wanting in every good work!

"And now about this horrid War: What a glorious Governor you have got! I wish I could say as much for New York! I feel very hopeful, but it is sad to know how many of our brave men have lost their lives in the Cause. And it is to be feared the end is not yet. If they would hang some of the *traitors* among us, who are secretly plotting against us, I should rejoice. Those who cry *Peace* with the rebels! *We* have not hung Jeff Davis yet, and I am sadly afraid I shall close my eyes forever without even hearing of the event of his exit . . ."

One of the young friends of the Nichols girls who went to the War, and sadly did not return was Edward Lewis Mitchell, 1st Lieut. 16th Regiment U. S. Infantry who died April 7, 1862, at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, "aged 22 years, 1 month, 1 day." The Mitchells lived in Flushing, L. I., and there are frequent references to Edward and his two sisters, from the time that the Nichols first came to New York. A letter of Eliza Blunt, the close girl friend of Peircie, states that in May of 1861 Edward:

". . . has been to Washington to apply for a situation in the Army, and has letters to Sec'y. Cameron, all letters being extremely complimentary. Of course I doubt if he gets the position as there are so many applicants, and if not, he will join as private in some regiment . . ."

But the letters reveal that Edward did get his lieutenancy, and unhappily survived less than a year after his initial trip to Washington. There is an envelope containing browned rose leaves, — today well over one-hundred years old, wrapped in a faded little note in Peircie's delicate handwriting, hardly legible, but we can just make out the fragile words: "These leaves were given to Agnes Beard by E. L. Mitchell, June, 1861. She gave them to me soon after E. L. M. was appointed 1st Lieut. of the regular army." Also in a carefully folded paper are bits of evergreen labeled as from Edward's funeral wreath.

These tangible seemingly everlasting "mementoes," the only ones of the tragedy of youth at this tragic time seem to acquire a universal meaning. The three Nichols young ladies appear to have lived most closely with their over-occupied father and invalid mother, and one would believe that their modesty forbade their preservation of "love letters" of this romantic period. Martha Nichols sustained a broken engagement in the War years, and Augusta appears to have had at least one beau, one Lieut. Quezey of the Navy. A letter from him follows:

"Prize Schooner, Gen. Taylor
Off Yorktown.
March 5th

"My dear Augusta.

I was very much surprised and very much pleased to receive your kind and welcome letter, together with your photograph for which accept my thanks. I think it is very good indeed than the one you had taken when *I* was in Salem, you ask me to send that one back, but I would not part with if for anything, it reminds me of those pleasant times passed in that quiet City of Salem, last Spring. I am in the hopes to be again at home, but the last of April *if not* before and then I expect to have some more of our old whist parties but I suppose that you would not object to playing again. We are having a very pleasant time here now excursions most every day and whenever we move there are always several ladies accompany us. yesterday we went up the

river with the Gen and his family on board, but a battery having been discovered we did not go up as far as we expected nor did we engage the battery on account of our having ladies on board — but tomorrow I believe we are going up to engage it and I hope take it.

"I suppose you will be surprised to see this letter dated on board a prize schooner, but it is only for a short time as she leaves here for some Northern port the last of this week. I hope that I shall be sent in her, but as I took the last one to Baltimore I dont think there is much chance.

Your letter I see is dated in Salem and post-marked *Cambridge* so I suppose you are making a visit there. I hope Lillie is not going to give up sending me her photograph for in her *last* letter she said just as soon as she had some taken I should have one. I must close this letter as I am so very tired and there are no accomodations for writing on board this vessel. I hope *you will write to me again very soon* for your letters will always be welcome to,

Your friend
Quizey.

"Remember me to Lillie when you write to her and tell her not to forget to send me one of her photographs."

NOTE:

Address on envelope, Miss Agusta Nichols,
Care John H. Nichols Esq.
Salem, Mass.

USS "Mahaska"

Civil war newspaper (one page) enclosed. "The Cavalier," Editor: J. Hiram Champion, A.M., 1st Lieut. 8th Indep't N.Y. Battery.

Three stories marked. The first about the execution of two privates of the 1st Penn. Artillery for murder of a private citizen for a supposed insult. The prisoners were hung outside the walls of Fort Yorktown. The story had a note in ink over it, "They were on board the Mahaska a week."

A war casualty which undoubtedly hit close to the heart of John was that of the son of his close cousin, William Ropes, who wrote to him from Boston on July 15, 1863:

"My dear Cousin:
Your very kind note full of sympathy and condolence, was most gratefull to us . . . Our beloved son had so long been preserved from harm

that we fondly hoped he would continue unscathed through the terrible battles yet to be fought. But it was not so to be . . .

"Dear Henry was beloved by all his officers and especially by his men to whose comfort and general welfare he was most attentive. His stand as an officer was very high, as we hear from many who were near him in the Army . . .

"In the last forced march of the Army in order to overtake the Enemy before they could penetrate into Pennsylvania, he wrote us 3 letters, so attentive was he to keep us advised of his movements . . .

Affectionately yours,
William Ropes"

Augusta Nichols wrote to her grandmother and aunts of her visit to the Russian Frigate at Fort Hamilton in 1863:

". . . I daresay you have heard from Mother about my visits to the Russian Frigate at Fort Hamilton, which I particularly enjoyed as I had never been on board any sort of vessel, or at a Fort before — I suppose that we received particular attention from the Russian officers, as we went with Capt. Meade of the Navy and Mr. Henderson who is Navy Agent. We were shown every part of the vessel, and the use of everything was explained — then we had a delicious lunch in the Admiral's cabin, and the officers, as a particular mark of politeness, waited upon the ladies themselves, instead of having a servant pass things around.

"The visit at Fort Hamilton was less pleasant because it was such a cold, chilly day, though Captain Blunt was extremely polite, and showed us all over the Fort."

Eliza Blunt, the Captain's daughter, was a close friend of the Nichols girls, and confided in Augusta:

"The day I received your letter I also received a very long one from William Knower . . . enclosing a vignette of himself in uniform, and requesting one of me, and if nothing prevents I shall have one taken tomorrow for him; Father and Mother both thought it a very fine letter . . .

"Laura Page called . . . and said that Mr. Mudgett's house and barn had been burned by the Copperheads — he is Union, and the hotel at Jackson has been burned, father says he thinks that the people who boarded at Mudgett's ought to send him a handsome present . . . Mr. Willson has been appointed Chaplain of the 24th Regiment."

On January 30th, '64, Augusta wrote from New York to Peircie at the Salem home:

"Dear Peircie

. . . We proceeded downtown. In Canal Street we saw a returned regiment. No notice at all was taken of it, but Hattie and I stopped and waved our handkerchief, and one soldier took off his hat, and waved it to us . . . On our way home we purchased a few cut flowers to make into little bouquets to carry to a Soldiers' Reception in the afternoon."

The Civil War correspondence of John Nichols is so voluminous that it has been needful to print it in a *supplement* to the chapter. However, included here are a very few of the more personal, as also the most important letters or Diary entrances.

In Washington John had a personal meeting with the outstanding Unitarian and poet, "the venerable Mr. Pierpont":

"We were also introduced to the venerable Mr. Pierpont, whose might of intellect is as marked as in his younger days. He seemed glad to meet me on learning that I was a brother of Mr. Crosby's partner, (Henry P. Nichols) of which firm Crosby & Nichols, his granddaughter is the bookkeeper, and in the course of conversation he alluded more than once to the contest in which he had been for many years in opposition to clerical dictation and intolerance . . ."*

The Civil War notes, letters and accounts for the years 1863 and 1864 are enlivened by the appearance of a small negro boy, named

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*"Reverend John Pierpont, one of our native poets, was first a lawyer and then a merchant. In the late Civil War, tho' past his three score and ten, he joined a Massachusetts Regiment as chaplain. He died at Medford in 1866, while holding a clerkship in the Treasury Department at Washington."

— Drake's "Old Landmarks of Boston."

(S. A. Drake — Page 415.)

Note: Above establishes the fact that "the venerable Dr. Pierpont," referred to in a letter from John Nichols of Salem, written in Washington, D.C. in 1863, had reference to the above mentioned John Pierpont. In the Civil War years, in Washington, where he was so poor, having given away even his clothes, that he went about his business dressed in an old plaid shawl.

Edward. Edward was evidently a child whose acquaintance John Nichols had made in Washington, D.C. At first Edward did well in his job of general houseboy at the house in Salem; when not busy in his chores in the house and garden he was attending school regularly. But his satisfactory attendance to both school and home duties seemed to lapse before long and his interest to fail after a first few months. This his kindly host attributed to homesickness for his father and family. After a time he sent for his father, therefore, and brought him north to New York and Salem to visit; in accordance with John's own ardent convictions, the negro was treated as an especial guest in his own household, and suitably entertained.

John tells affectionately of Edward, in the "Chronicle of a small negro boy named Edward" in which he wrote of the little boy's months with him. Evidently the child's companionship and talk was a pleasure and relaxation, — and one guesses a true entertainment to his employer, who possessed a notable sense of humor. In John's letters throughout the period of Edward's employment and visit he is constantly mentioned with evident enjoyment; the following letters are to his wife, and the orginal is in John's handwriting and titled "The Chronicle of a Small Negro Boy Named Edward."

"Sunday, July 19, '63

"Edward has been to church all day. This morning Gen. Oliver was in the porch when we arrived, and without knowing that I was interested in him (Edward) the Gen. accosted him very pleasantly and offered to show him a seat in the gallery. The recent attack upon the negroes in New York has excited a general feeling of sympathy for them, and indignation against the Irish, and I doubt not will result very much to the prejudice of the latter, as indeed it ought. How perfectly horrible and fiendish are many of their acts, but I will not repeat them since you doubtless have enough in the papers to make the heart sick. . . Currants you know are my favorite fruit. Would it not be well to make some more currant wine this year? Should the War be soon ended, the poor soldiers will need wine for several years.

"Salem, July 23, 1863. . . I think Edward bids fair to be of service to us, but he needs watching as he is fond of play, and yesterday afternoon was away for several hours in the river, etc., which I do not object to for an hour or so, but do want him to work about the house and in the garden most of the time he is out of school. He usually

arises at about 5 o'clock, and helps me gather raspberries, currants, etc., besides sweeping the pavement before breakfast.

"This week I sent to Miss Lowell a keg of port wine, and a box of crushed sugar, perhaps 50 lbs. — and the same to Mrs. Gray, also a box of Tamarines, and a box of sago to St. Louis. I likewise wrote to Mrs. Gibbons for ascertaining if anything were needed at her hospital. . . "

"Salem, August 24, '63 . . . This afternoon I proposed that Edward and his father should visit the museum, but to my astonishment found that by the rules of the society colored people were not admitted with white — consequently I shall be obliged to get some member to wait upon them in the morning. Of course no reflection can be cast upon Mr. Paul, but it is really disgraceful to the society that such a regulation should be allowed to remain in force, and trust that the next meeting a petition for its repeal will be presented.

"Thanksgiving Day ('63)

My dear Wife

". . . This morning Edward and I finished gathering Currants for wine, and tomorrow the manufacture will be completed, but I suspect the quantity will be much less than we had last year. At about 12 o'clock May Ann announced that Miss Pickering wished to see me, and on entering the parlor Miss Fanny P. and Miss Latrobe from Maryland were introduced, — having come to Salem for the purpose of visiting the museum and court house, but as this is a holiday it was no trifling matter to gain admittance. — However as the family of Miss Latrobe were very hospitable to our soldiers when stationed near the Relay House — Charley Williams and Genl. Hinks being among the number, — I could not hesitate to show them all the attention in my power, and after an hour's labor and with a fee to the keeper of the museum succeeded in procuring admission, but regretted they were unable to see the old relics in the Court House. — Miss Mary Pickering whom I met this afternoon, informed me that Miss Latrobe's mother was a Southern lady, consequently I felt she was entitled to greater attention on that account, for her hospitality to the Massachusetts boys when even in Baltimore they were subjected to gross insult. —

". . . Edward's father proposes to come here in the course of a week or two, and if convenient for us to accomodate him I suppose it

will be advisable to have him stay at our house . . . Weren't you delighted with the President's proclamation in favor of the colored soldiers? It seems to me just the right thing, but such an idea had never occurred to me. — I hope it will be rigidly enforced. — Have you seen Mrs. Lincoln? She spent last Sunday at Center Harbor, but did not make a very favorable impression, either as respects her education or refinement. — I forgot to tell you that Mr. Winterton looks upon the President as the man best fitted for that office in the country, and would be very glad to have him re-elected . . .

Yours most affectionately
John

"I sent your mother a bottle of Cherry Brandy and another of Currant Wine today."

"Thursday evening, December 10, '63

I have been with Edward to the mother of the boy who owned the volume of Farley's Magazine. She said her son had no right to give it away, and the reason of his giving it was that Edward asked him for it, but he received nothing in return. I was glad to find the matter was no worse, but cannot account for the falsehood that his teacher gave it to him, and that she at the same time gave books to the other boys. It seems that Edward preferred lying to speaking the truth, as in this instance, the latter would have answered his purpose better.

" . . . On Thursday I dined at home, but do not expect to again before Sunday, as my purchase of Fifty Thousand Dollars in Gold yesterday rendered it necessary to go to Boston today, . . . Next week, however, I hope to be more steady, and give a little more time to the children. This morning I was a little disturbed by the rumor that gold had fallen to 105 in New York, which if true would have been a decline of $6,000 in the amount I bought yesterday. On inquiry, however, I found that the price was really higher, and my purchase was about $800 more favorable than can now be made.

"Last night, O. W. Holmes gave a splendid Lyceum Lecture, but as the girls thought it not quite prudent to attend, I remained at home. Tomorrow evening, however, I shall go to a meeting at Mechanic Hall in aid of the freed men of General Grant's department, at which Chaplain A. T. Fiske, detailed by Gen. Grant for that service will speak."

"Salem January 12, '64

. . . This morning Margaret brought a formal complaint against

Edward for playing one of his pranks upon her, — such as drawing aside her chair, just as she was sitting down, which caused her to fall upon the floor. He seems to take particular pleasure in teasing her, and she says when you come home there must be a change, either in his behavior towards her, or by one of them leaving, as she cannot tolerate such conduct any longer. I was, of course, very much vexed with him, as the consequence of a fall backward might have been serious, and I told him he would not be allowed any time to play next Wednesday or Saturday, and if he continued such practices I should take him from school. He is, however, much better than formerly, and I have not detected him in a falsehood for a long time."

"Salem, January 29, '64

Our new girl, Ellen, has been with us for two days, does very well so far. Yesterday she made some of the best gingerbread I have eaten at any time, and her bread today was very good . . . Edward seems very well disposed toward her, and I hope he will play none of his tricks. This morning he asked me privately if he should make the fire in the range in future, as Ellen used too much wood for kindling. He has twice of late been sick for half a day or so with sharp pain over his eyes, and this afternon stayed from school in consequence . . ."

Here is the last mention of Edward, and he was soon after dispatched back to his father in the South. This was written on the eve of his wife's, Augusta's return home from one of her "cures" at Dr. Taylor's in New York. So it seems likely that Augusta's return and Edward's departure had a certain foreseeable relation.

"Norfolk, Va., Feby 8, '64

"My dear Wife

. . . (I went to) the Capitol, where I heard an admirable sermon from Mr. Channing, whose other services were also remarkably appropriate to the time and place . . . Immediately after dinner I left Washington and arrived at Baltimore in season to take the boat for Fortress Monroe, which we reached at 7 A.M. The passengers were directly marched to the Provost Marshal's office and also took the oath of allegience after which I had an hour and a half to look around the fortifications and other objects of interest . . . I have accomplished nothing by going there, as the Copper I had hoped to buy brought as much or more than it would cost in New York, . . ."

"On Board Steamer City of Husdon

"I forgot to mention that Gen. Butler charges a fee of one dollar for the pass to & from Norfolk, whereas to & from Fortress Monroe the pass at Baltimore costs nothing. Does it not therefore look as though the General pocketed that fee? — From the boat I had a view of one of the Russian frigates and a French, also the Chesapeake general hospital, a noble structure and in a very conspicuous position. The Rip Raps, Sewall's Point where the rebels at one time had a formidable battery, — At Gosport the destruction of Government property is really heartsickening, — the walls of scores of brick buildings, some of great size and apparently very valuable, the hulls of frigates, gunboats &c just perceptible above the water, remains of machinery, materials of these vessels saved from the wrecks &c &c, present an appearance of waste and desolation incident to this wicked rebellion such as I hope never to witness again . . ."

On February 23, 1865, Martha Nichols, visiting in Brooklyn, New York, undoubtedly at the home of her close friend, Agnes Beard, wrote to her Aunt Lizzie Nichols in Salem:

". . . Last night I went to the Theatre with Edmund and Eliza Hyde to see Booth in Hamlet — It was the first of Shakespeare's plays I had seen, and I was entirely carried away with it. I often wish I did not enter so much into the spirit of a Play — it seems altogether too real . . . Is not our War news splendid? One glorious victory follows another in such quick succession, we can hardly realize the magnitude of each. To know that our flag floats again over Fort Sumter is enough for one year, but I think we shall hardly have to wait so long as that for Peace, for how can the Rebels fight much longer! I should think all their spirit would be gone — Aunt Mary Hyde wants me to tell Aunt Sarah that she has as good an opinion of McClellan as ever."

John's letters to his wife in Salem do not reveal whether he witnessed the Inauguration of Abraham Lincoln for his second term, but, sadly, he was a witness of his beloved leader's funeral procession in mid-April:

"New York,Tuesday P.M. 1865

"My dear wife:

. . . After breakfast — say, at about half-past eight o'clock, I concluded to make the attempt to see the corpse, and by joining the

crowd at a favorable point, I succeeded in about half an hour in entering the City Hall, and passed the body hurriedly. The countenance looked very natural, and I was very glad to have the opportunity to look once more upon the form of our beloved President. Business is wholly disbanded, and scarcely any omnibuses are allowed on the streets. While I am writing the funeral procession is passing the Astor House. Broadway is crowded with the different societies, etc. which have taken part in the ceremonies. There is to be a great gathering in Union Park at 5 o'clock, which I shall try to attend . . .

Goodbye,
Affectionately, John"

THE YEAR 1865 brings a number of significant letters written in the direct wake of the War. This comes out in the following, addressed to John H. Nichols:

"Boston, Sep. 16 — '65

"Dear Sir:

I believe you knew of the letter which we received from President Lincoln in answer to one which I sent him with a Number of the North American Review. I have often thought that as you had at the time quite as much of a claim on the Review as we had, it would be very proper for you to own the letter. I take pleasure therefore in sending it to you, as I know that you will value such a memento of Mr. Lincoln.

"Please accept the portrait and the lettter and let them have a place among your memories of the good President.

Yours truly,
William Crosby"

The death of John's much-loved stepmother Betsey in the year 1864, and that of his father a year later, affected John deeply, and seemed to have changed his lifelong attachment for the home city of Salem. To a friend he wrote:

". . . On the 19th of October my father passed quietly away, making the fifth vacancy in my wife's and my families within fifteen months. The old gentleman failed quite rapidly the last sixty days of his life, but retained his mental vigor until within fully eight hours of his death. The homestead (80 Federal Street, Salem) is of course very much changed now, and my sisters particularly miss the care of

the 'old folks' which devolevd upon them so many years, and which they met so cheerfully. Many of the ties which have latterly bound me to Salem being dissolved, and my wife and children having more personal friends, to say nothing of relatives in New York, the idea of a change of residence has been frequently entertained by us . . ."

Up to this time John had lived in New York only periodically; in the early months of 1866 he and his daughter Peircie went systematically "house hunting" and toward the spring of that year, after much consideration, he brought a house on beautiful Stuyvesant Square on East 15th Street.

The house at Stuyvesant Square suited all the family, not only those living there permanently; the maiden sisters of John from Salem complimented the house by their visit. Even Sarah who is not known ever to have left 80 Federal Street on any other visit, traveled to New York and called the house "surely the nicest house in all that great city." John's closest sister, Lydia, visited the house a number of times. On July 9th in 1866 she wrote home to her Salem sister Sarah from there:

"Augusta . . . says she shall depend upon a visit from you. I know you would enjoy it very much, they are all kind and make one feel so much at home. There are a great many beautiful walks and drives around here. Last Thursday we went to St. Luke's Hospital which is a most delightful place . . . a young lady went all around with us, and we enjoyed it very much. It took up so much time we were unable to go to the Old Ladies' Home . . . We afterward took the car and rode up to Central Park again, as Augusta felt I had not seen as much of it as she wanted me to . . . Saturday we went to John's store, and one of the partners showed us all around and explained the different machinery. We then came home, took a glass of iced lemonade, and then went down Broadway and Canal Street, and called at several stores and went into a picture gallery . . . and on our way home Augusta insisted in taking me into a refreshment room, where she treated me to a plate of delicious ice cream, and a glass of iced water, which refreshed us very much. In the evening John had some sent to the house, so you see we had a double portion . . ."

Of her first visit on June 20 of 1866 Lydia wrote home to her family in Salem:

"My dear brother and sisters,
I have been partly around the house, and into the garden, after having made a very nice breakfast of corn cake and delicate baker's rolls, wiped the bottom of my skirt with a wet rag, for I got it a good deal spattered, as they water the streets so much that they are quite muddy, and have got my trunk mostly unpacked, and before doing anything more will write a few lines . . . We had a pleasant ride to Boston, (from Salem) . . . and a very pleasant call at the store, Henry being as kind as possible, furnishing us with comfortable seats, Lottie with a stereoscope and different views, and me with a newspaper, he directed us to the Worcester Depot, . . . John had arrived and attended to the baggage, so there was nothing for us to do but to get into the cars after having waited some time; I enjoyed the ride as far as Worcester, where we took our lunch; John got out and brought in a mug of tea, for Mrs. Taylor . . . I soon began to be tired, and before reaching New London I perfectly longed to lie down; we had a very nice stateroom on board the boat . . . I went to sleep, though I hardly expected to sleep at all, the motion of the boat was so unpleasant to me, but Lottie admired it; we were washed and dressed and out on deck at twenty-minutes before five . . . I should have enjoyed the sail more, but I felt a little sickish; the scenery all around was delightful, it seemed more like beautiful panoramic views; we arrived here at about 7 o'clock. They gave us a most cordial welcome, and all are as kind to me as possible; they seem to wish that you, dear Lizzie, could have come with me, as Augusta said that you and I had been in the habit of going together, and then she wanted you, dear Sarah and Mary Jane to make your visits together. I admire the house so much, it is so pleasant and convenient . . . One thing I am *very* sorry for, Lottie's umbrella was left in the car; there were so many things to remember, the bird cages and baskets were hung up, and I found it rather difficult to get them down . . .

Yours most affectionately,
L. R. N."

Evidently in the years of their definite establishment in New York, the postwar years, the girls were resuming the accustomed gaieties of young ladies, to which many light and delightful letters attest. Peircie wrote from the fashionable summer resort at Mt. Desert, Maine:

"Dear Mother:

Tonight we are to have a *hop,* but as there is only one young man in the house, and he does not dance, I don't think I shall enjoy it very much . . ."

And the youngest Charlotte could write her first impressions of the Opera: . . . "The Opera yesterday was very fine. *Macbeth* was the one we saw. Madame Mederi took the part of Lady Macbeth and acted very finely, but her singing did not altogether satisfy one — at times she flatted notes very much, or rather quite perceptibly — Bellini was splendid."

Even John had time for his comparatively light-hearted amusements:

"New York, January 20, '66

"Dear Augusta:

The great agony is passed. I have seen Booth in Hamlet, but thanks to a good lady who sat next to me and gave me the use of her opera glasses a few minutes, otherwise I should have lost the best part, being unable to see the expression of his face by the aid of my spectacles alone, but having once seen such passion depicted in his countenance as I could never have expected to witness, I felt more sensibly than ever before the want of sight, or a powerful telescope. Although the performance occupied three-and-a-half hours, or thereabout, and I did not leave my seat once, yet I could have given my undivided attention to Booth as much longer. Some of the other actors played their parts admirably, still none could begin to compare with Booth. Miss Effie Gorman, in the character of Ophelia, presented insanity after the manner of her father, in a very touching manner, and her funeral, after she had commited suicide by drowning was truly sad. But I will not attempt a description of the performance, as anyone I could give would be perfectly absurd . . .

". . . Business prospects are not very flattering . . . I met Edmund Blunt who intimated that overtures had been made to him by several friends to engage in a commission business, which may prove of sufficient importance for my consideration in connection with him . . .

Affectionately,
J. H. N."

A letter from Salem contains reports of gaiety there:

"We were to have had a grand parade of the Light Infantry today, Veterans and all, but the weather has been unfavorable. They were to appear, according to the morning paper, 'in chapeaus and side arms, kindly loaned by the Newburyport Artillery Association.' But as it has rained fast ever since the morning, the Veterans have apparently concluded not to expose their borrowed plumes or their own persons to the storm, so about eleven the crier came around to announce that the parade was postponed . . .

". . . Carrie and Annie Leeds . . . seem much the same as ever, bright and pretty and talkative, 'not a bit spoiled,' people say, though while going to Europe should 'spoil' anybody I don't exactly understand. They wear extremely small hoops, and extremely long dresses, the skirts of which are gored in every breadth. They dress their back hair even with the tops of their heads . . . I am getting shockingly behindhand in the *semaine litteraire.* In fact, the last story was so exceedingly stupid that I only read half of it . . . A silly story in English is bad enough, but in French it is intolerable . . .

". . . Salem is peculiarly quiet just now, as a goodly portion of its inhabitants have gone a-pleasuring. How this mania for sight-seeing and traveling spreads . . . How one of our Puritan ancestors would have stared if he could have witnessed the annual stampede . . ." I went to Boston the other day to see some friends and relations of mine . . . He is a superintendent of a coal mine in West Virginia where they live in regular settler style, log-cabin and all . . . They have two children, one a little girl of six who has already tried life in the back woods, and looks as if it agreed with her, and the other, a little girl only six months' old who hardly looks fit to rough it. Mr. Appleton was major in Col. Shaw's colored regiment, and served with great credit during the War."

And another girl friend, Sue Mitchell, writes to her friend Peircie Nichols from Flushing, Long Island on February 25, 1866:

". . . Did you hear that Willie Cook has been attacked by Mexicans in Texas? One account says he was mortally wounded — another, which seems the clearest, that he was wounded in the knee, and a lieutenant who was with him, killed . . ."

From Annapolis on February 1, 1870 Sue Mitchell writes an interesting letter to her friend Peircie:

". . . I never want to be in worse *jams* than I have been in in Washington — You might as well leave your skirts at home, as long as your head and waist are all dressed. Long dresses are perfect nuisances. Every sensible lady, almost, wears short dresses for dancing . . . the *Monarch* has arrived. She is six miles from Annapolis. To-night the Midshipmen give a tournament — hop after. Monday night there is to be a large hop given for the *Monarch*. Peabody is finally at rest, so I suppose they think they can enjoy themselves, and have a good dance . . . Admiral Porter's daughter gives a German tonight in Washington. The names of those invited fill *ten* pages of fool's cap. She hopes to send the old people home by 12, by not having music till then, and have the young people keep it up till seven the next morning. In Washington, the young ladies are not invited without their mothers or someone to chaperone them . . ."

And Sue Mitchell's letters conclude on August 27 with reference to the book she is reading — "*Little Women* is the most spicy, jolly book I've read in a long time — don't you think so? Wish I had not read it, that I could have the pleasure again . . ."

A letter of unusual interest reflects the abuses of voting in New York and John's lifelong interest in the American Indians:

"My dear Wife

. . . On leaving home at about nine o'clock I went to deposit my votes for judges and city officers, but learned to my astonishment and indignation that some contemptible scoundrel had previously voted in my name, representing himself as a resident of 304 West 15th Street. I immediately went to the Metropolitan Police Station to ascertain if I could have any redress. Judge Bosworth's assistant advised me to go to the polls with a witness, who would be likely to be known to some of the officers there, and demand me the right to vote. I accordingly called on Mr. Elliott, to accompany me in the afternoon, but on stating my case to Mr. Ward and at the Tribune office I found such an application would be of no avail, as such frauds are not uncommon, so I concluded to yield, but shall look out in the future to be on hand when the polls are opened. Mr. Ward said he always went before breakfast, and on Tuesday deposited his votes soon after six o'clock. Yesterday's Tribune announced that some person voted in the name of one of the City's Justices while he (the justice) was present and on hearing and on being challenged

the inspectors allowed the fraudulent ballots to be deposited and the police officer refused to arrest the culprit unless ordered to do so by the inspectors, who declined to interfere and so the scoundrel escaped. Is not this a nice state of affairs in our pure City of Gotham?

"Last evening I attended the Indian Convention at Cooper Institute, which was exceedingly interesting. The President of the Cherokee Nation was present and addressed the audience, but not being able to speak English fluently could say but little. The gentleman however who followed him, although a Cherokee, was highly educated and used remarkably fine language. He said the Indians did not want alms, but simply justice. The Cherokees had 41 schools and 2 colleges, supported entirely by themselves, that the United States purchased from them some years since twenty one millions of acres of their land for the insignificant sum of seventeen cents per acre, but which had never been paid, although the Government had taken possession of the land, and placed other tribes upon it — That Rail Roads had been located across their territory without their consent, which however they would not object to, if white settlers and the whiskey barrel could be excluded — and that now it was proposed to remove all the Indian tribes from their homes and consolidate them upon a vast tract of reserved lands, civilized and barbarous, friends and foes, all together, in spite of the fact that their claims to the lands they now occupy and their independence to the authority of the United States had been recognized by our highest tribunals. These outrages are but a small fraction of those enumerated by the different speakers, all of whom were highly intelligent, educated and refined, many of them very energetic and deeply interested in their work of trying to prevent another general Indian war . . .

Affectionately
John"

Permanently settled in New York, John entered into a business partnership with Edmund Blunt, the son of his friend of the war years. The New York firm "Blunt & Nichols" was a combination of commission business and investments which involved a number of Western connections. These connections took Mr. and Mrs. Nichols on numerous trips to the Middle West, from the end of the year 1865 to 1869. In the New-England-John there was aroused intense interest in and astonishment at the "advanced civilization" in this hitherto

unknown part of the country, and this is interestingly recorded in his letters home to his children. The following letters describe John and Augusta Nichols' travels to the Middle West 1865-1869:

"Cataract House
Niagara Falls, June 27 ('65)

"My dear Children

Yesterday forenoon it rained considerably but cleared away in season to admit of our driving over to the Canada side, or Manchester as people here call it, but which the Canadians claim as Niagara and name this side Manchester — Until we had a view of the Falls from the opposite bank no idea could be formed of them, nor even then until we went under Table Rock, a distance of 130 steps or more below the surface when an overwhelming sense of their grandeur suddenly came over us and we saw with new eyes and a feeling of awe and almost terror has ever since constantly attended me. As an illustration of their height imagine if you can a sheet of water half a mile or more in extent rushing in perfect torrents over a precipice equal in height to the tower of the South Church, with such force and volume that it appears would soon drain the ocean, could a place of deposit be found for the water. The descent below Table Rock is perfectly safe, down a circular tower at the foot of which we walked a hundred feet perhaps, on either side, but not so far as to get wet with the spray, although everything was covered with water around us, and we even felt it while driving and walking in the road — Before reaching a point opposite the lower or American Fall, brilliant rays resembling a rainbow began to appear which soon extended as we advanced to a perfect bow, the ends resting on the Canadian side, and almost on a line with the river or rapids below, but which rose as the sun declined and at last the whole disappeared, after an interval of two hours, all of which time the bow advanced or receded, as we went forward or back — On our return we stopped at Lundy's Lane, the battleground where General Scott distinguished himself in the War of 1812, and where General Miller made the memorable reply of 'I'll try, Sir.' I have not spoken of Suspension Bridge, as we left that to be particularly examined on the way home, or rather to our hotel — That excited our admiration and wonder more than anything we have seen, excepting of course the Falls. Just as we reached it a train of five passenger cars and a locomotive passed over, without the

slightest perceptible vibration — indeed I was told that a heavily loaded train caused only an inch vibration . . .

"Your mother has entirely recovered from her fatigue, and is going over to Goat Island this morning to take a last look at the Falls, after which she wishes to leave Niagara, as the noise of the rapids in our room has become almost intolerable. I have been advised by several to cross the river below the Falls, in a row boat, but as your mother dislikes the idea, and feels that there may be some danger attending the passage, I shall not undertake it, although it is considered perfectly safe.

"12 o'clock — We have taken our last view of the Falls, (unless we catch glimpses of them on our way to the cars) and are perfectly satisfied with all we have seen and encountered, *except the petty system of sponging, on the part of those having the charge of sights,* which are truly disgusting; but we were saved many impositions by the timely caution of a gentleman who had been victimized; therefore we have not spent five dollars to our regret, or for which we did not receive an equivalent, and I would particularly recommend the Cataract House to all persons visiting Niagara Falls.

Affectionately
J. H. N."

Evidently John's wife did not accompany him on his trip to Buffalo, New York, in 1866, for his letter "from Tifft House" of February 10, '66 is addressed to her:

"Dear Wife:

. . . I was induced to procure a berth in the sleeping car, which is the best I have ever seen, being furnished with nice hair mattresses and pillows, sheets, coverlids, etc., so that although I had not a perfectly quiet night's rest, my position was comparatively comfortable, and I did not rise until six o'clock in the morning, and the seats were so well arranged and ventillation so good that after reading the New York papers, I read some fifty or more pages in this *Across the Continent* which Henry lent me. After dinner I went in pursuit of Edmund, and in about half an hour found him at Mr. Bestorphiono's house where he is visiting . . . The parlor carpet is precisely like that on our sleeping room, and gave me quite a home feeling . . . Edmund still feels confident that business may be done by us to advantage, but can have nothing definite before going to Chicago where most of the

grain that crosses the Lake is owned. He thinks it will be practicable to hire an elevator of sufficient capacity for our purposes, and it is his idea that in order to control business we should own, or lease, an elevator so as to offer to merchants the advantage of lighter expenses here than the Association would charge, and in that respect I think he is right. It is his plan to reside here in order to receive and forward goods to New York, and go West when necessary . . . Mr. Blunt would be very glad to have Edmund in his store, but will not stand in the way of his son's interest. The old gentleman is really to be pitied, for the affairs of his store are in a very deranged condition, and at home someone is needed to superintend household matters, as Mrs. B is quite sick, and Eliza is not interested in domestic affairs, but is willing to give lessons in music, which her father objects to, and yet he would be much relieved if her inclination would lead her to spend a portion of her time in the kitchen and similar cares.

"Buffalo is a city of 100,000 inhabitants, and an extensive business is done here. The Tifft House, the best in the city, . . . and now the proprietor has a machine shop for the manufacture of steam engines, and Edmund thinks he also owns a large elevator. The streets are very wide, the main being twice the width of Chestnut, and many of the stores would do credit to Broadway. Many of the houses are also very fine — one of the best belongs to, and is occupied by, Ex President Fillmore . . . I am sorry I could not call on the Crombies yesterday, but in order to do so I must have omitted Lottie's stamps, or a portion of them. Tell her I have spent $7.50. Consequently, have a goodly number, but hope she will not think me too extravagant."

"Biddle House,
Detroit, October 15, 1868

"My dear Children

You will be glad to learn that the fatigue of travelling has not as yet proved too great for your mother, although we have gone over the road quite rapidly, having ridden 735 miles since Monday evening. We reached Detroit at 10 o'clock last night . . . This morning I rose at 8 o'clock by New York time or about 5¾ by Detroit. The train will leave for Chicago at 10 A.M. consequently I hope we will have an hour to spare in driving about the City, which is evidently a place of considerable importance. The ride from Niagara yesterday was not particularly interesting . . . We had a view of Lake Ontario . . .

where we saw one or two vessels of considerable size. Paris and London did not give us a very favorable idea of the same cities on the other side of the Atlantic."

"Sherman House
Chicago, Oct. 16

"We arrived here at 9½ o'clock last evening after a pleasant day's ride over the Michigan Central Road in the most superbly finished car I ever saw, but very far inferior, as are the offices informal, to their sleeping cars . . . a number were going to St. Paul, which was spoken of in the most rapturous terms, and if equal to the descriptions we have heard, must be a perfect Eden . . . I cannot say anything about Chicago as a whole and would not attempt to describe it, as you know Gussie hates such letters.

"My chief source of gratification is the benefit I think your mother will derive from this journey, as she has borne the fatigue remarkably well, has a good appetite, eating beef-steak, oysters, cake, &c at night with equal impunity as in the morning, sleeps soundly and appears to enjoy everything.

In haste, affectionately
J. H. N."

"Sherman House,
Chicago, October 16, 1868

"My dear children

Our visit to this place has been less satisfactory than to any other since leaving home, inasmuch as we have failed to see many objects that came within our plans, owing to the fact that the hackmen were both ignorant and unscrupulous — or rather appeared not to know what would most interest strangers. We had a splendid view of the Lake which was a grand sight — the water being considerably agitated by the strong wind. We saw but few fine private dwellings, according to our ideas of nice homes, although undoubtedly many were quite costly. On the whole neither of us would fancy Chicago as a place of residence."

"Plankinton House
Milwaukee, October 17, 1869

"Our astonishment here has fully equalled our disappointment at Chicago. This hotel is not surpassed by any of its size in any part

of the United States. Indeed I understand Mr. Plankinton employed an architect with directions to examine all the first class hotels in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh &c and then build one here superior to all others, and I think he has succeeded in many respects. The plumbers' work, so far as I am capable of judging, is perfect. The house is elegantly but not gaudily furnished — a steam engine I presume is used to do the cooking, pumping &c as the tall chimney and dense smoke indicate such an arrangement. I was never more completely taken by surprise than by this place. It already has a population of from 75 to 90 thousand — the streets are uncommonly wide, much taste displayed in the dwellings most of which have ample space around them and a much larger proportion than I have seen elsewhere are calculated for genteel residences. A two hours' ride around the city gave us as long a ride as your mother could conveniently undertake, in view of a rail road trip of 195 to La Crosse and a sail up the Mississippi River to St. Paul before tomorrow morning. Of all the places we have visited thus far Milwaukee, or the Cream City, is much the most attractive.

Affectionately, J. H. N."

"Union Depot Hotel
Pittsburgh, October 27, 1868

"My dear children

A ride of 65 miles yesterday morning brought us from Milwaukee to Chicago, where we remained until half past one o'clock and then took the train to Columbus distant 314 miles arriving there at 2½ o'clock this morning. Columbus contains many public buildings. As a whole it has the appearance of a place that is dying out, the people do not manifest energy, most of the buildings we saw were of wood, rather diminutive in size, somewhat old and dilapitated, and everything wore a decidedly untidy aspect. At 11½ o'clock we left Columbus for this place and arrived at 7½ o'clock, having traveled 193 miles, or 592 miles within thirty six hours, and not too tired, as you perceive, to write this last letter before retiring. The route through Indiana yesterday was quite monotonous, through prairie land, as level as a floor, far as we could see, and apparently much more sterile than any we had before seen, but still capable of producing immense crops of Corn, of which we must have seen many thousand acres. Occasionally our interest was excited by fire among the grass, which

sometimes raged furiously, and at one time the atmosphere of the car was quite oppressive, owing to the dense smoke around us. Although the same staple has been the only one in view today yet the scenery has been entirely different — so hilly as to remind us forcibly of New Hampshire. When we approached Pittsburgh it was so dark I could not discern much, but imagine we can spend an hour or two in the morning very agreeably in driving through and around the City, which you are aware contains a very large number of Founderies and other manufacturing establishments. Within two hours of arriving here, we went through nine tunnels, one of these was the longest I ever saw, being from a quarter to a third of a mile in length. In my last I spoke of the freedom from dust we had experienced since leaving home, but since then we have not been able to congratulate ourselves in that respect — the soil along the entire route being sandy or clayey and ground to so fine a powder as to penetrate everything.

"This journey has afforded me as great and perhaps greater satisfaction than any I ever took. It has given me ideas of the west wholly at variance with those previously entertained by me, and with one or two exceptions my opinion of the business people is as men of integrity, intelligence and high moral principle is decidedly more exalted than I would have believed possible before coming here, and were I a young man starting in life, I think no place in the world would present so strong attractions to me as a permanent residence. The common idea which seems to prevail at the east that every man, woman and child here uses intoxicating liquors is wholly unfounded, so far as my observation has extended. Indeed I have scarcely seen a person under the influence of liquor since I left home.

"Lochiel Hotel, Harrisburg,
October 29, '68

"My dear children

. . . After breakfast at the Union Depot Hotel (Pittsburgh) which by the way is decidedly the most expensively furnished we have seen, although not in so good taste . . . we engaged the services of a very obliging and intelligent hackman to drive us around the City, which may justly be termed the Forge Shop of the United States, as the immense number of rather numberless Iron and Glass Works emitted such volumes of smoke as to cast a pall over the place which had the

appearance of dense fog even in a bright sunlight, consequently all the buildings, and everything else, not excepting the inhabitants or transient visitors were covered with smoke. Our approach to the City in the evening, over a magnificient bridge which crosses the Monongahola River at a great elevation, when the buildings which line each side of the river were ablaze with gas lights and the large number of Forges were belching forth volumes of fire, presented a very peculiar and perfectly unique appearance. The land on both sides of the City rises to a great height, and instead of being graded for building purposes is laid out in terraces. We visited three Glass Manufactories, one of Flint Glass, where Goblets, Decanters, Lamps & Chimneys and various small articles are made, another of window Glass . . . the third of Bottles in great variety . . . But the busiest place of all in this busy City was in the vicinity of the Rail Road Stations . . . Just as we were leaving Gov. Seymour was escorted through as rowdyish a crowd as you would wish to see such a man accompanied by . . . (The scenery between Pittsburgh and Harrisburg) reminding us forcibly of the Gulf of Mexico."

The following letter of July 25, 1870, appears to be the final letter written from John in his "old stand No. 42 Washington Street." For August of this year was to bring a decided and sad change in the John Nichols family, leading to their three-year sojourn in Europe. The letter follows:

"My dear wife:

"Here I am again at my old stand No. 42 Washington Street, rather more tired than if I had remained at home the last two days, but still in pretty good condition for a veteran of 52 years old . . . After breakfast this morning I went over to South Boston to call on Uncle H. N. who has been and is now quite unwell, but he had gone over to the city, as usual in the forenoon. Aunt was glad to see me, and said Uncle was particularly gratified by the attention of his friends. He has a troublesome cough and is quite feeble, and yet he rises at 4 o'clock, and will work in his garden as long as he can stand. After closing the within letter in pencil, I met William E. Waters on board the boat, and was thinking of offering him half of my room, when I discovered that he was a rank copperhead; which of course settled the matter against him.

"I bought a small piece of black velvet at Brackett's for my two

new coin drawers, and at same time spied out a parasol, which I thought would answer for Lottie, and hope it will suit her ladyship . . . Rumor says we are to lose our neighbor, Gen'l. Andrew, and that Boston will be the gainer — so we go — but after all old Salem is not to be despised. The horse railroad is working much better than it did. The cars seldom run off the track, and they carry a great many more passengers than the estimate, their receipts being sometimes towards Seventy-dollars a day, which ought to afford a handsome profit to the stockholders . . .

John"

In the years 1868-1869 and the summer of '70 there are gay and amusing letters from the Nichols girls on a summer holiday on Long Island's fashionable South Shore at "Wave Crest" and at far "Rockaway." But these holiday letters at the beach and the era of girlish gaiety under the protection and supervision of their parent John were soon to end.

Late in 1870 tragedy again fell to the share of the Nichols family, striking especially the inmost heart of John. His daughter Peircie, his own congenial companion, and undoubtedly most loved of the four daughters, died in New York of the prevalent typhoid fever.* I find no intimate letters telling the sorrow of her devoted father and family. Characteristically, thinking more of comforting and diverting the grief of his wife and daughters than of his own suffering, John promptly determined to take all his family to Europe. They sailed from New York late in 1870 not to return until August, 1873. A letter to his friend and correspondent "Samuel" written from Florence, Italy, on January 14, '71, follows:

"Dear Samuel:

We have met many very agreeable persons from England and elsewhere, and have received much kindness wherever we have been — and but few of the discomforts we anticipated, before leaving home. Prices of most of the necessities and luxuries being very much lower

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*Elizabeth Peirce Nichols, called affectionately "Peircie" died very suddenly during the late summer of 1870. Her letters show that she inherited her father's sense of humor, with an added sprightliness of her own; that she was very popular with friends and family, and that she had intelligence as well as charm.

in Europe than anywhere in the United States. We shall hope to enjoy a great deal in travelling, and make purchases of some things to remind us of our visit, without exceeding the amount of our ordinary expenses at home. Until a few days it has been our intention to visit Rome in February — but the smallpox and diptheria which are raging there, and of which many Americans have died, may detain us from going there until next winter.

J. H. N."

The story of the family's stay in Europe is told not only in John's frequent letters to his sisters in Salem, but also in the Journal kept by his daughter Martha, and in the collection of bills and correspondence carefully filed by her father. In spite of the cheerful vein of John's letter to his friend at home, here is a story of constant fear of strangeness, of disease, or discomfort, and of the astonishment that these things pictured by other travellers, did not transpire.

John filled his letters with enthusiastic detail. On February 18, 1872, he wrote from Rome:

". . . is it really possible I have seen the ruins of the Coliseum, the Caesers, the Temples of Venus, Minerva, and other antiquities which have always been frought with intense interest to me from boyhood. It appears that I must have been dreaming the last three months, and that after a while I shall wake to the reality that I am still plodding along through the streets of Gotham . . ."

For the greater part of their stay in Europe the family lived quietly in Florence; the daughters took lessons in languages and music, and they, as their mother, were particularly delighted at occasional meetings with friends from America. Their father seemed more interested than the rest of his family in the life of the country. He describes festivals and ceremonies with enthusiasm, tempered with a touch of scorn that such "childishness" should amuse the people. He says of the carnival in Florence in March, 1873, "altogether the affair was perfectly unique and quite fascinating, particularly to the Italians, who are more easily amused than any people I have ever seen."

The three Nichols daughters wrote voluminously from Europe, and as one would expect, kept diaries. There are enchanting flashes of that period as seen by young ladies from Salem and New York which are illuminating. One episode tells of their shopping expedition in

Paris where all that was noted with interest was the cost, style and material of the French gloves — this with the War of 1870 in tragic progress less than one-hundred miles distant. How odd to reflect that these same young American diarists had been themselves so recently anguished and involved in the wartime activities of young women in the American Civil War. Evidently it was difficult to transplant Americans from Salem when the era of the clipper ships had passed, and the world involvements and their aftermath were not yet on the American horizon.

The following letters from John's New York friend Mr. Ward kept John informed as to home news:

"New York, May 21st, 1872

"My dear Sir:

. . . The grand Coliseum in Boston, erecting for the Musical Festival in June blew down ten days since, they are bonding all the energies of the "Hub" to get it rebuilt in time . . . Niblo's Theatre is burned to the ground and is to be rebuilt by A. T. Stewart by Sept. 1st. The Metropolitan Hotel had a very narrow escape. Loss $500,000 fully insured of course. Murders are rife now, we have two or three every day, the crime record in New York is beyond everything heretofere known — These devils have grown so bold that they knock down and rob people in day light & in the thickest settled streets, when pursued they draw Revolvers and no one likes to interfere and be shot — Murmurs loud and deep are heard of a *Vigilance Committee* and I shall not be surprised any day at seeing one in life — Judge Cardoso has resigned as the Legislature were about impeaching him — Judge Barnard will be impeached and tried and there is a determination here to clean out the corrupt Judges as soon as possible, Horace Greeley's nomination to the Presidency is considered a *huge joke,* but there is no knowing how it will end, he would be a disgrace to the Nation if elected, but there will be a tremendous effort made to elect him by the outs who want to get *in*. . . . The old Herald Building on the corner of Fulton & Nassau is being pulled down, & an Iron building 8 stories high is to be erected at once — In fact turn whichever way you will new buildings meet your eye. I never saw so many or such large and costly Structures going up in New York, as to Union Sq. you would never recognize it, it is now the Centre of business, and every foot rents for what may be asked — People seem to be

insane here — Where it will end no one dares predict, *a settling day must come* . . . The country has been suffering from a severe drouth . . . Flour is $14 pr. bbl. Hay $45 per ton . . . To crown the whole, all the Carpenters, Masons, Joiners, Plumbers & others have struck for 8 hours work & increased pay, this must put a stop to building. I am not a croaker as you know, but I can't help thinking that we are on the eve of troublous times, and if the Alabama claims are not settled & Europe sends back millions of our Bonds for sale we shall see the days of 1857 over again very soon."

"New York, July 15, 1872

"My dear Sir,

. . . The trial of Stokes for shooting Fisk resulted today in the *Jury disagreeing,* consequently a new trial must be held. Judges Cardozo & McCunn of the Tweed Ring were deposed by the Senate, the latter died last week of mortification or as he termed it a *broken heart* — Barnard will soon be tried and no doubt deposed — as three bigger scoundrels never disgraced the Ermine. . . . Everybody who can steal, beg or borrow money enough goes to Europe now — There has been and still is an Exodus going on that astonishes people . . . The city although *clean at last* showed that it is far from healthy — 1558 deaths last week — 171 more than in any week since the city was built, not excepting the Cholera times. The undertakers do a big business. I don't wonder people leave the City — Typhus Fever Sun Stroke (82 cases in one day) over heat and Small Pox seem to be the chief causes of death. I saw by the papers that a Monument to be placed over Jim Fisk's grave, costing $25000 is being prepared in Europe, paid for by his widow. The Grand Jubilee in Boston being over we have had Sunday musical sensations caused by the Concerts of Strauss and the various European Bands — one each from London, Paris, Vienna and Dublin & altho the fashionables are absent the Academy was packed . . . I will merely state that the subject of widening Essex St. from Washington to Summer came before the Aldermen last week and is being ventilated but I doubt its success as there is too much old fogyism left there yet . . . If the Crops come in well of dividends '& such like' I intend putting on a clean shirt & starting for the old world with Sophia . . . It (the N. Y. Times) suggested Sunday excursions into the groves of Long Island for poor children from the Five Points & similar portions of the City, money at once poured into the Editor's hands (over $4000). Barges, Steamers, Bands and

Music, Sandwiches, Lemonade, Cake & Candies were furnished & two excursions of 800 children each, have been had with perfect success. Police were detailed and proper men and women hired or volunteered to protect the little ones, some of whom never were outside the City or on a Steamer. Funds enough to give two excursions a week for 4 weeks are yet unexpended and aside from the unbounded pleasure it conveys it no doubt reinvigorates & saves hundreds of lives of these little Street Arabs. It creates quite a sensation when they embark to see the ragged, barefooted & bareheaded urchins each with a ticket clutched fast wending their way, hours before the time of starting, to the dock and cutting up all manner of antics at the expense of the timid ones. Now for improvements; the new P. Office is up two Stories & will be finished this fall — so promised. The Drexel Building opposite the Treasury, goes up like magic and must be finished May 1, '73. It will be a gorgeous structure — Look where you will & in spite of Labor Strikes, new buildings are going up & old ones undergoing alterations. Business is very dull, everywhere, money cheap if you have anything palatable to get it on — Crops promise splendidly — Everyone feels well just now looking for big fall's business . . ."

By the spring of 1873 the news from home was disquieting. Business conditions were bad and gave indications of getting worse. The family decided to cut short their trip. They left Florence in April, travelled through Germany and France, stayed for a month in England, and arrived in New York late in August. In the spring of 1874, John sold his house on Stuyvesant Square and bought another, and somewhat smaller home at 10 Livingstone Place.

While the youngest daughter of the family, Charlotte, had been a child on the family's first coming to New York, she returned from the European trip as a grown-up young lady. Two social notes written to her by young gentlemen friends, and characteristic of the period follow:

"My dear Miss Nichols: Your note came just as I was brushing the last stray lock of my auburn hair. My immaculate cravat has received its last twist, and I am just on my way to dine out. I can't disappoint the hostess without rousing her wrath, and I can't disappoint you without feeling miserable at the thought of what I have lost.

"If a note received this afternoon for Mr. S. is from you, he has not received it, but if he does not accept your invitation when he knows of it, he is not the fellow I take him for.

With no end of thankful regrets, I am
Yours truly,
Arthur H. Cutler"

"My dear Miss Nichols: Your note of yesterday is just received — a thousand thanks for the same. But what shall I say at this late hour?

"I have already accepted to go with some ladies to Thompson's Concert at Steinway Hall — so I am not at liberty to accept your kind invitation. Mr. Cutler I have not seen since morning. I notice that he has a note also from you — If he is not with you, he has gone to dinner at Mr. Theodore Roosevelt's, as he had such an invitation early in the week. This is a most unhappy concatination of fortuitous circumstances. Believe me that I most truly regret the necessity of this note.

Please commend me with regrets and regards to Miss Simes.

Most unhappily yours,
Henry K. Spaulding"

In spite of some happy society for the girls in their new home on Livingstone Place, this house also was sold in 1878 and the family moved away from New York to the quiet of the country at South Wilton, Connecticut. This move was determined partly by the diminution of John's business income, and the steadily failing health of his wife, Augusta. John occupied his ten years at South Wilton with the daily care of his wife, gardening, and notably with work on a genealogical record of his Salem family. This exists today in the archives of the Essex Institute, a notable tribute to his painstaking exactitude, and his patient and beautiful penmanship.

Yet, even in the almost utter seclusion of the South Wilton years, John was ever mindful of the high apex of his sad, and often tedious life — that high point of the brief Civil War years which had given him his opportunity for his most important service. On April 8th, 1883 we find him writing again to his friend "Samuel":

"My dear Samuel:
At the close of the War I had a quantity of cherry brandy on hand, which I had bought for the Government Hospitals. At that time it

was old, and of course it is much improved by age . . . It occurred to me that for the trouble you are subject to in summer some of this might be of service . . ."

Affectionately,
John H. Nichols"

Meanwhile, the deep bond of affection and mutual understanding and dependence between John and his three unmarried daughters appears even to have deepened. Augusta, the eldest, stayed steadfastly at home to help her father with the incessant care of the invalid mother, while Martha and Charlotte went frequently to New York: Charlotte to give music lessons, and Martha to fill engagements as "companion" — both daughters of necessity contributing to the ever more meagre family income.

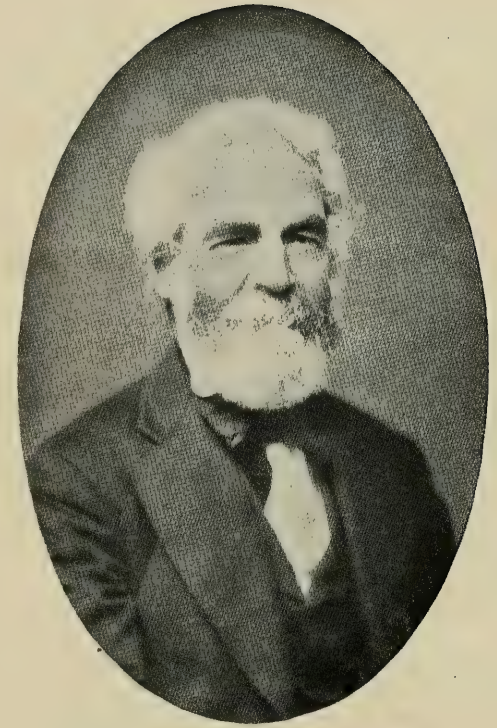
John's utter devotion to his wife is manifest throughout all their years together in everything that he said and did. His thoughtfulness of her, his dependence on their companionship appears continually in his frequent letters. A close friend compared his attitude to that of a chivalrous knight through all vissitudes, and to the end.

On June 12, 1881, John's seventieth birthday, he wrote for the first and only time in the letters that have been preserved of his personal sorrow. — This letter appears to have been written to his own inward self:

"This lovely day, — almost the first since June came in, is the seventieth anniversary of my birth, and the occasion is one of mingled joy and sorrow, of joy that I have been granted so long a term of almost uninterrupted health, so many domestic privileges and blessings, and countless other favors, such as fall to the lot of comparatively few, — of sorrow that I have been so short-sighted, that my most cherished plans have been thwarted, that my anticipations of pleasure and rational enjoyment for those most dear to me have failed of accomplishment through my weakness or folly, and that my long years of toil have resulted in so little satisfaction, and causing me more than ordinary pain in view of the tokens of affection I am constantly receiving at their hands. However, I trust my sorrow for these and other shortcomings has not been manifested in such a way as to have been giving pain to others, and that I am not disposed to take a gloomy view of life, and especially that I do not indulge such feelings of dis-

(Courtesy, Cambridge Historical Society)

LIVING ROOM WALLPAPER, Brattle Street, Cambridge, House



GEORGE NICHOLS, JR.

SUSAN FARLEY (Treadwell) NICHOLS

My dear Mr Nichols,

"Vala" is all right. She is the Norse Sybil. You see I have been unable to hold my hand from adding a line or two in the Idyll and a stanza in the ballad. I hope I haven't made 'em too long.

Whittier's poem is a beautiful one, full of feeling and force.

Yours Ever

J. R. L.

P. S. Will you have my Mss. sent back to me? I promised it to Norton.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL TO GEORGE NICHOLS, JR. *(left)*, JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL *(right)*

J. W. T. Nichols with His Mother, Cambridge, Taken by Surprise

Dear Lizzie
I am very old you wrote me a
letter. I sleep with George now we have
Good Bye and Good Love from
Charlie

Charles Sanders Nichols
to His Sister Lizzie *(above)*
George Ropes Nichols in His
Coat with Brass Buttons *(right)*

AUNTS LYDIA, LIZZIE AND MARY JANE NICHOLS *(left)*, MARTHA NICHOLS *(right)*—"The Maidens"

ELLEN NICHOLS (on the right) WITH FRIEND, Tercentenary, 1926

JOHN HENRY NICHOLS

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

AUGUSTA NICHOLS WITH SON GEORGE

CHARLES GRAY AND CHARLOTTE SANDERS NICHOLS

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

CHARLOTTE IN LATER YEARS

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE, Front Entrance — E. CASSELL IN FOREGROUND

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE, Salem

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE — First Floor Hall *(left)*, Second Floor Hall *(right)*

PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE—First Floor, East Parlor

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

Second Floor, East Bedroom

(Courtesy, Essex Intstitute, Salem)

West Parlor, Scene of George and Śally's Wedding, 1801 *(left)*, Painting of Cupid by Vervoort *(right)*

(Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem)

PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE — Compting-house and Courtyard *(left)*, Garden *(right)*

GOOSE, A Recent Nichols Winner

pondency as to incapacitate me for the enjoyment of the numberless blessings vouchsafed to me . . ."

Even in the quiet of South Wilton, books and memories of the Civil War years were often in mind. A friend wrote:

"Dear Mr. Nichols:

I sent a copy of 'Ploughshares' which I thought would interest you and your daughters. A prominent character in this is drawn from Gerrit Smith.* I thought so when I read the novel last spring, but was not familiar with Smith's life to be sure. The resemblance is remarkable, some of the best-known words and deeds of Smith being attributed to Jared Clarkson . . ."

John's close and deeply-loved brother George died in Cambridge in the year 1882, and others of his friends and relatives in Salem and Cambridge were going also. A letter from a friend in Salem brings the sad comment:

". . . I have a regular correspondent in Cambridge who informed me of the death of my friends, Professor Peirce and Longfellow, and also of the death of your brother which followed hard upon Longfellow's . . ."

John's wife, Augusta, died in 1885, and now something went of the spontaneous interest and joy in life that never quite came back. Yet, after two years, the reaction from the terrific strain had worn off, and there were flashes of the old humor. Birthdays especially were faithfully celebrated with thoughtful little gifts and amusing doggerel between John and his daughters and John's three sisters, the devoted maiden aunts, Lydia, Lizzie and Mary Jane, retaining the old homestead in Salem.

John's seventy-fifth birthday in 1886 found him still in South Wilton, and undoubtedly pursuing faithfully and quietly the same routine. We find a little doggerel written we would think by his devoted older sister Lydia to accompany her birthday gift:

"Here's to the Union
Of Nickels and Nichols,

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*Gerrit Smith gave pecuniary aid to John Brown, was a member of Congress for N.Y., 1853-54. With Horace Greeley signed the bail bond of Jefferson Davis in 1867.

Seventy-five bright little nickels
With Nichols of Seventy-five years
Which of the Nichols
Is brighter or fairer,
Must rest with the sages and seers."

John's older sister Lydia, ever the closest to him, continued her visits to South Wilton through all the years of her brother's home there. There are many little accounts of these visits. So on John's seventy-seventh birthday on June 12, '88 the following letter reached him from Salem:

"Will our dearly-beloved brother please accept this trifling gift from his three sisters, Lydia, Elizabeth, Mary Jane, in commemoration of the seven-times-eleventh anniversary of his birth. We hope he will not consider it a measure of our love for him or our gratitude for his untiring favors. I wish we had the pretty little calico dress and the white crochet cap which he wore with his little black curls hanging beneath his cap the first time I took him out to walk when he would have been only about three years old. But I must not enlarge, and will only add

Yours most lovingly,
L. R. Nichols"

And on a birthday of his sister Lydia, John wrote from South Wilton on January 14, 1887:

"Will Miss Lydia Ropes Nichols please accept from her brother, John H. Nichols, in commeration of the eightieth anniversary of her birth, the accompanying eighty nickels, and, to sweeten the same, eighty bites of confectionery of eight or more varieties, manufactured by her niece, Augusta Nichols, also a case for her sun and rain umbrellas — the handiwork of the said Augusta, and likewise a lambrequin, eighty inches in length, for the mantlepiece of the said Lydia Ropes Nichols, which was wrought, embroidered or ornamented by Martha Nichols, and fringed by Charlotte Sanders Nichols, . . .

"If the purse of the above-named John H. Nichols were long enough, eighty doubloons, or eighty double eagles would have been gladly substituted for the eighty nickels . . .

Very affectionately,
John H. Nichols"

And Lydia replied delightedly:

"My dear brother and nieces,

What can I say to you for your unspeakable kindness in sending me such beautiful and very acceptable gifts? I hope you will never speak of our extravagance again in regard to our gifts to you . . . The eighty nickels and the box of confectionery, why it was altogether too much! We send you, dear Marnie, the Audibon papers with our signatures to the pledges; your Aunt Lizzie couldn't sign the third pledge, having a bird in her best bonnet which she didn't feel willing to take out . . ."

There are very many letters from John to his sisters: They are very affectionate, dull and prosaic, but his always adoring sister Lydia writes to him "We cannot allow you, dear John, to speak so disparageingly of your letters, as we all think they are *all* very interesting, telling us just what we want to know . . ."

It seemed that in the end John should return to the home of his youth. In the year 1888 he sold the house and garden in South Wilton, and moved with his three daughters back to the old family homestead at 80 Federal Street in Salem. Here amid the scenes of his youthful exploits and his busiest business years, John spent the peaceful, but busily occupied, last ten years of his life.

One of the last letters in the family collection of John Nichols concerns the great blizzard of 1888, written from Martha in Salem to Augusta still in New York:

"Dear Augusta:

. . . Papa returned from the office with fearful accounts of the storm, road blocked: No trains from New York yesterday up to the time of the newspapers going to press: Telegraph poles down: Horse cars stopped running in New York, and altogether we fear you are *buried* in snow. We feel anxious about Mabel Ainsworth who started for home yesterday morning, and Papa doubts if she ever got as far as New Haven. It has been the worst storm of the season: The sun tries to struggle out every little while, then it retires, and the snow begins again . . ."

On Wednesday, September 16, 1898, there was a notice in the *Salem Gazette:*

"JOHN H. NICHOLS

ONE OF SALEM'S MOST HONORED AND OLDEST CITIZENS

"Passed away at His Home on Federal Street, Today.

"John H. Nichols, one of the oldest citizens of Salem, died at his residence, 80 Federal Street, this morning. He was born in this city, June 12, 1811, and was the son of the late George and Sarah Nichols. He attended first, a private school, and next the old Salem latin grammar school. Leaving school, he entered the office of his father, who conducted an extensive real estate brokerage and insurance business. He also learned surveying and became an expert and an authority of drawing of deeds.

"His father's office was in the building next south of City Hall and the parent took the son into business with him, and later, another son, Charles S. Nichols, was admitted. The names of the three — Geo. Nichols, John H. Nichols and Charles S. Nichols remained on the door for a great many years.

"In 1866, Mr. Nichols went to New York, continued in active business there a few years, and then with his family went to Europe, where he remained two years. In 1876, he removed to Connecticut, residing there until 1888, when he came back to Salem, to spend the rest of his days.

"Here he was interested in a large number of estates, as a trustee, and, at the time of his death, was one of the trustees of the valuable West estate. He had been about the streets up to within a few weeks, his step being remarkably quick for one of his advanced age. He was a man of the strictest integrity and highly esteemed by all who knew him.

"He leaves three daughters — Miss Augusta Nichols, Miss Martha Nichols and Miss Charlotte S. Nichols; a sister, Miss Mary J. Nichols, and a brother, Charles S. Nichols. His wife died in 1885.

"He was long prominently identified with the old North Church and was the last survivor of the original subscribers to the present church edifice. He was the first president of the Salem Mutual Fire Insurance Company."

Yet, perhaps characteristically the local town paper mentioned nothing of John's important and outstanding work and services for the nation at the time of the Civil War. This aspect of his life was

tenderly touched upon in a letter from the Reverend John Taylor Gilman Nichols to John's sister, Mary Jane:

". . . Your brother John was a dear cousin to me. His noble, manly qualities early won my admiration. There was not gold enough or power enough in the land to cause him to swerve a hair's breadth from what he believed to be right. Such integrity of thought and life, such firmness of moral principle, I never saw surpassed, and I believe is rarely equalled. And while so conscientiously exact in his business habits, that all who knew him little might think him close in his expenditure of money, it required no very intimate acquaintance to discover the tenderness and generosity of his spirit. Hundreds of suffering soldiers in the Civil War can testify to this . . ."

XIII

THE PEIRCE-NICHOLS HOUSE

EVERY HOUSE IS BUILDED BY SOME MAN —
BUT HE THAT BUILDED ALL THINGS IS GOD

— Ichabod Nichols, 2nd
Catechism of Natural Theology, 1831

THE TALL MCINTIRE HOUSE stands today as it has for two hundred years, at the corner of Federal and North Streets, Salem, a busy intersection of roadways. It is eloquent of the history of this city, as of the families Peirce-Nichols and Johannot who lived there; and through them this family house becomes eloquent also of the developing, and vibrant life gone out of it to contribute in turn to the life of our country.

Not part of a block of elegant and beautiful old houses, this distinguished McIntire House on Federal Street stands alone, overtopping with its generous extra story and Widow's Walk, above all the houses of lesser stature in this neighborhood. It stands above the railroad tracks, the smoke the bewildering highways and the unsightly city dumps of our day. Its own towering height, its beautiful solid proportions, seeming even to raise this height above the smoke-filled city below, and bespeak a certain magnificent, if grim dignity — the remains of a by-gone era.

Like a tall, lone sail at sea, this house rises suddenly before our eyes as we round the corner of Federal Street. Looking up at it, I can almost fancy that it is alive, so expressive it seems to me of its own eloquent era and character — it seems to stir and move against the sky above and the city far below as a full-rigged ship moving through its native element.

We are apt to be a people of "Externals," and so with our old houses and their "histories," we are all too apt to preserve and consider the shell.

Old houses, such as this one, beautiful as they are, are today mere shells, for life has gone out of them, the life for which they were conceived! Beautifully as they may be restored and redecorated in accordance with their time, it is primarily this molding, shaping, inhabiting life which has made, and which still shapes their meaning for us today. Without some understanding of that living organism

which has inhabited here, the shell loses its meaning, and the house loses its function as a milestone of beauty and history. Is it just a shell? Is it not mainly this shell which has held the family together? Back of all the generations — behind our disparate locations, histories and philosophies, there emerges as a common backdrop, this beautiful and ghostly house in Salem.

I was fortunate to be the first to come — after many years of family life and death, of preservation and of neglect which went on for over 150 years in this house at 80 Federal Street in Salem — on the boxes of faded letters, the "diaries," the hidden or the openly expressed thoughts or confessions of those who had lived and built their lives here; so here I looked, not so much into the past as "on a peak in Darien"* into some new and hitherto undiscovered country. Of course, I had long heard and known of certain characters in my family, but they were all so long ago that I could not really know or care for them. However, their letters, their dance cards, a discarded hair ribbon here, a work box and account book there, an imposing file of log books in the trunk, brought them alive all about me.

So this became at length my own family house and the hand that shaped it, its character and feeling, is not primarily that of the architect, eminent as he was. No, it is not Mr. McIntire; it is my family and those who have made it, emanating from the person of the ghostly, mysterious witch, Susanna Martin, she who I find laid the foundations of this family long before the stones and bricks at 80 Federal Street were laid, and continuing through the generations of captains of the high seas and the tall, white sails. Here I catch the echoes of the drums and the marching feet on the cobbled streets outside; shadows of the great flags held high in the processions flutter just beyond the windows; and there are the black-edged handkerchiefs in the white hands of girls welcoming what were left of their men home from the Civil War.

Time, the omnipotent is the actual ghost, or perhaps a succession of ghosts — individual as eras may be individual. Or perhaps this ghost may be more exactly viewed and sensed as the repetition of time, of seasons, or of years — of trends in the bloodstreams of families.

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* Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer"

Our family house I feel to be so haunted — as have family members before me, notably Martha Nichols, author of the autobiography of her father, *George Nichols, Salem Shipmaster.* In many of Martha's charming sketches, never published, the house is the central character, and this "haunting" is subtly revealed by the most gifted and sensitive of this family's historians.

Returning to Salem as a descendant, to the city of my ancestors, my instinctive feeling tells me that I have returned to a haunted city. Salem is no city such as I have visited before, and yet here I am entirely at home, seeming to know my way about. It is of another era — a city of the past, haunted by beauty, by memories, by golden days of supreme happiness and success, by visions of the tall white sails on the high blue seas, and by constant thrills of courage and valor! Yet suddenly there is a cloud across the sun, as I read the surprising, incongruous story carved on the black plaque of stone affixed to a building on the busiest thoroughfare: "Most of the nineteen persons who suffered death on the gallows were tried here for "witchcraft . . ."

I am not myself writing this historic chronicle of my Salem family and ancestors — I am "compiling" it. My family and ancestors of several hundred years back are writing it themselves from the beginning. For I am taking my material for this book from the vast collection of letters, log books, contemporary newspapers, sermons or writings discovered in this old house. This book is "ghost-written" for my family and ancestors, since I was merely the first to come on all the endless variety of personal signs and tokens of the Peirce-Nichols family. This was not only the treasure house of innumerable voices of the past I found, but these voices told with a ghostly prescience of the future as well; for ghosts, particularly family ghosts look both ways, and in these family records I discovered endless repetitions in flesh and blood.

I would bid my reader to do as I have done and to hold every part of this beautiful ancient house and what have been its contents in documents, letters and diaries, as recorded here in my book, to his ear as he would one of the seashells preserved in the old cabinet of treasures — and listen! Listen as since a child you have listened to the miracle of the sea's eternal voice and echo in the beautiful shell which remains. Listen to the voices of an old and seafaring family.

And even the varying handwritings add their interpretive aspect and

sound: the spidery feminine hand adds grace notes; the small, compressed hand of the diary attempts to hide its secrets; the broad, black masculine stroke of the log book setting down the weather of a storm at sea bespeaks courage and determination; the meticulous hand of the *compting house* records the endless patience of the long days at home when the writer was no doubt looking longingly out of the small top window and wishing himself away at sea with his brothers. It is interesting to observe the difference between the masculine and feminine writing of the eighteenth and up to the middle nineteenth century. These reveal that the very lives and occupations of men and women of these days were different. However, it is also interesting to note that the difference becomes less marked and disparate as the decades unroll toward our own day. The handwritings of the children are as notably serious and copy-book conventionalized as are their little faces in the child portraits of an earlier day, as in fact were their very lives, in the accounts revealed in the family letters.

LISTEN TO THE WEATHER. I must be very conscious in this chronicle of the weather — the climate of each day. It is as important as the soil in which my family, my "vine" took root. Yes, weather whistles, rushes, sighs, or sings through these pages of the log books, diaries, love letters, or children's notes. Here weather seems the immortality of place and time. It is the changeable within the constant, and supports and surrounds the life that has gone on here. Each change and changeable brings with it its mood — the mood of the day or season, holding and surrounding its objects, its plants, its people and its generations; and these in turn are born, developed, live and die within its ever-changing, never-changing breath and air!

This weather recorded by my family is not an easy or tropical climate at any time of the year. It is harsh, with occasional miraculous breaks in the heavy over-hanging clouds. Flashes of intermittent lightning or sun are sudden and beautiful.

In Salem, as in all New England, particularly on the coast, there is the dark weather breeding gloom and despondency. Out of one of these periods we have the "Diary of Sally Peirce Nichols" writing many of these pages in this her father's house, as the young bride of Captain George Nichols, who shortly after their marriage left her for voyages to the East — for that cargo of spices which would increase his already considerable fortune. But "I don't know how I

can bear it" writes broken-hearted Sally in one of her frequent fits of melancholy, waiting for George's hoped-for safe return.

As a first sign of spring, even before the mountainous snow in the yard and garden has melted away, another diarist looking pensively from the overhanging windows has noted the "never-failing shy little snowdrops blooming under the stone stoop . . . they never fail to come by the end of February . . ."

Then here is the hot fecund weather strong with the scent of lavender and syringa from the garden . . . and this weather brings vibrant memories!

The storms or calms on far seas, even, seem blown into this Salem garden and parlor on the parchment notes and letters from the absent men of the family on their far voyages; letters carried in many a wife and sweetheart's bosom, and never to be forgotten, or the harsh reports of this wind or that set down in the broad, black penstrokes of the log-book, eagerly scanned at the return of the ship. Salem people have been bred and cradled in weather from their first beginnings . . . through all the years and generations since Susanna . . . a belief has endured here as a feeling, which pervades the town of seafarers, even when in the golden fall of countless maples that border the wide streets, the elder ladies meet to sew, to reminisce; listen . . . their talk will be of the weather, — and how does it compare with last year, — with ten years ago, with the time of mother's or grandmother's golden season . . .?

And this weather seems to gain an almost ecstatic quality when in the present season we get a hint of the season to come, — for it is seldom this weather we are in that is the enchanted; — here is the human quality, the humanity of weather! Yes, this old seafaring people of old New England are born in their element, and it makes their talk, their thought, their lives, their fortunes, their memories and their hope.

Our Nichols ancestor, Susanna Martin, had this accusation against her, "that she walked the muddy streets and never got her skirts drabbled . . ." So Susanna had the bad fortune after years of suspicion and accusation against her at last to come afoul of the weather. And this unfortunate encounter was one of those accusations which finally contributed its evidence to her conviction and hanging on Gallows Hill in the year 1692.

Today the house at 80 Federal Street is a museum. Yet, as I enter its wide and beautiful doorway, as I walk down its ample stairway so beautifully constructed by the master builder, I become sharply aware that I am here, this particular sentient being in this particular place today just because of those innumerable feet before me. Those who have trod this ascending or descending broad stair — it is their hands I all but touch, cold or warm, beside mine on the smooth, deliciously worn railing. Outside the whole sunbaked garden earth bespeaks the plantings of a hundred summers or more past, and the same brick walks lead gently down through the terraced garden under the ancient pear and the mulberry tree whose fruit seems only waiting to be gathered by the children of one hundred years ago.

After the Revolutionary War Jerathmiel Peirce, with a keen eye to the future, bought the land for this house, in 1779, at the "top of the town" where his ships might be seen first coming in from their far voyages. At this time Jerathmiel was already an able "merchant prince." Immediately on his return from the war, he began to plan for the house of his dreams. He had not been home more than two or three years when these plans were carried into effect. With his newly acquired wealth, and love of his growing family, he would naturally hire the best he could get — the rapidly rising young architect, Samuel McIntire* — to build this house.

Jerathmiel Peirce, a founder of the Peirce-Nichols family of Salem, and the builder of the beautiful and distinguished house which "is the family's most important and lasting legacy to the City of Salem,"** was the seventh and youngest child of Jerahmael and Rebecca (Hurd) Peirce of Charlestown, Massachusetts (his own name being first given with the spelling Jerahmael, and with the

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* In the words of Jerathmiel's great-granddaughter regarding McIntire: ". . . in his day before his genius was fully recognized he was the favorite architect not only in Salem, but in some of the adjoining towns and Salem certainly has reasons to be proud of the many examples of his skill. That he was given free rein to his fancy is shown by the fact that when my great grandfather complained of the fact that the windows in the third story were smaller than in the first and second, Mr. McIntire simply said that the proportion was better as he had planned and the windows remained."

** Lawrence Nichols, *Nichols Family of Massachusetts*

remark in connection with the father — "his, the father's name, is also incorrectly written 'Jerathmiel' ").

The Peirce Family in America goes back to John Pers of Norwich, Norfolk Co England who emigrated to Watertown, Massachusetts in 1637.* Jerathmiel's father is stated to have been a cordwainer, he in turn being the seventh child of Benjamin and Hannah Peirce of Charlestown, born December 22, 1708. Both the father and mother of the boy, Jerathmiel, died before this son was of age, and Jerathmiel being told to choose his own guardian from among his elder relatives chose his older brother Benjamin, born in 1738. Some years before the outbreak of the American Revolution, Benjamin went to Salem to seek his livelihood, taking his younger brother with him, — and at this period Jerathmiel is said to have been apprenticed to a leather dresser, and the family collection includes a beautiful piece of white leather dressed by him. With the outbreak of the Revolution, Benjamin took an active part and rode to Lexington as one of the brave volunteers on the fateful night of April 19, 1775 where he was killed on Lexington Common. At this date the younger brother Jerathmiel would have already been of age for several years; — he already had a reputation as an able and wealthy merchant captain and had taken a wife, Sarah Ropes, from one of Salem's oldest families.

Jerathmiel and his wife Sarah, married in 1772, had in all nine children, five of whom lived to maturity. Of these three were Joseph, who went to sea and died tragically of the fever in the West Indies in the year 1794, apparently breaking his father's heart, and his mother Sarah outlived him by only one year. There was Sarah, born in 1780, who was to marry her brilliant young cousin, son of Jerathmiel's companion Ichabod of the Revolutionary days, Captain George Nichols. They were married in the beautiful east parlor of her father's great house in the year 1801. There was Benjamin who would graduate first in his class at Harvard 1802, and who would in turn marry his cousin Lydia Nichols, and found a family unsurpassed in the history of American intellectual achievement. The two youngest of the family, Betsy and Henry, were born in the then "new" house on Federal Street.

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* *Charles Peirce* Great Thinkers Series, Washington Square Press, 1965

The actual building of Jerathmiel's house was undertaken in the early 1780's. We can almost hear the hammers, the knives, the workers in stone and wood plying their craft. The building was completed in its first form in 1782, and the east rooms were done over and embellished with the beautifully carved interiors in 1800 — designed and in part carved by the patient hand of McIntire himself. Handsome mirrors at each end of the east parlor are thought to have come from France; the four matching window-seats were carved by McIntire, and all "was completed in time for Aunt Adams' funeral, and for George and Sally's wedding two days later."* We have George's own account of the wedding in his autobiography as follows:

"I remained at home about two months, during which time occurred an event of the deepest interest to me, viz., that of my marriage, after a long engagement of several years. The ceremony took place on the 22nd of November, 1801, on Sunday evening. We were married by Rev. Dr. Hopkins, in my Father Peirce's great eastern room, which was finished and furnished only a short time before. My wife wanted only a day or two of being twenty-one years old, and I have often laughed and told her she was never free. No one was present at the wedding but the two families. Betsey and Charlotte were the bridesmaids, or at least considered themselves so. Sally's dress was a beautiful striped muslin, very delicate, made in Bombay for some distinguished person. I purchased it of Nassar Vanji, at five dollars per yard. He gave me at the same time a camel's hair shawl, quite a handsome one. I returned the compliment, by presenting him with a set of Mavor's Voyages. Afterwards he sent me a shawl of a larger size and handsomer. This muslin Sally wore over white silk. Her headdress was a white lace veil, put on turban fashion. Her cake, of which she had a large quantity, was made in a great bread tray by Nellie Masury, a sister of the late Deacon Punchard. She was quite celebrated as a cook. I had forgotten to mention that the day we were married, Sally went to meeting in the morning with the family, dressed in mourning; and in the P.M., she went in her usual dress. We immediately went to housekeeping, in a house on

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* Notes of the Essex Institute on Interiors of the Peirce-Nichols House.

the corner of Washington and Federal Streets, then County Street. This house is now standing, 1858."

Again the family historian, Lawrence Nichols, has written significantly of this important event in the Peirce-Nichols family "much took place on November 22, 1801."

It took place in the recently completed East parlor, which symbolized more than anything else could have, the extent to which the younger brother from Charlestown had made his mark in the town of his adoption. To quote Richard Pratt's description of the house in the book *Regional Houses:*

"Samuel McIntire was in his early thirties when he designed this house for a wealthy East India merchant of Salem named Jerathmiel Peirce, a man who obviously could afford the best — and in this case got it. For this was just about the finest wooden house in America. Not only was it McIntire's design but every important piece of carving was done by his own hands, from the original urns that capped the fence posts, to the doorways, cornices and mantels within. Like most early American craftsmen, McIntire lacked any formal training in architecture; but as far as he was concerned, you could hardly call this a handicap. . . . (From) an English volume of architectural details . . . McIntire got many of the ornamental features which distinguish this extraordinary house, such as the Doric order of the facade and the Georgian mantel of the dining room . . . But of course the main conception was McIntire's alone: the general mass and plan, and the bold idea of the great Greek corner pilasters that did so much, you can be sure, to please Mr. Peirce as he paced his balustraded roof, peering out across the bay for the tall sails of a clipper coming in from China."

In fine, the large Nichols Family spreading in numerous generations from the great event for which this stately room was prepared have long treasured the memory of this brilliant and lovely wedding; and most fortuitously they may all actually see and visit this beautiful house today, and stand in the very spot where Sally Peirce and George Nichols exchanged their vows.

As the deepest emotions are said to kindle from man's feeling for his native soil, so it appears that the beautiful family house and garden may be the final symbol of family feeling and devotion. Even today it is largely the romantic tie of this marriage which has bound the

subsequent generations of the Peirce-Nichols family to the old City of Salem.

A few of the letters written by Jerathmiel's children in their youth are quoted here in full as they give a good idea of this family's life, character and affection:

"Salem, January 23 1799

"Dear Betsy,

At your request I improve a few leisure moments to ask you, if you shall go through Latin. I do not think I shall: for I don't like it so well, as when we first began. I suppose, you know Mrs. Rogers* will keep school in this town, if she can get a house; but I am told she cannot. I shall depend upon seeing you at our house, this afternoon.

Adieu

Charlotte Nichols"

To Betsy Peirce Salem
From
Charlotte Nichols Salem
January 23, 1799

From Benjamin Peirce, Cambridge, to his cousin George Nichols

"Cambridge Sept 8 1797

"Dear George,

I was in hopes that I should not be under the necessity of writing you first — but I believe I should have to wait a *good while,* unless I set it *a-going* myself — I long to hear from you, and I hope I shall *soon* be freed from suspense. As to subject, nothing can come amiss — I look to you for one branch of information entirely, viz — the ladies — They, I suppose engross the chief of your attention at present — let us know how they stand affected toward the *rough old sailor* — Your situation must be agreeable. I assure you tho my hapiness is too much blended with yours to envy you, I can't help wishing to be among you — I feel myself now begining a new life I look around me, I see hardly anything which I can recognize — every thing almost strange — and not only strange, but *preposterous* — for where I *used* to find the least noise, I now have the most — And *that* only at my meals, and *where* we have confusion enough — Among my

*Mrs. Rogers was a wellknown School Mistress.

companions, although agreable, I don't find George — However next to Salem, I anticipate the most pleasure in College. Indeed, I think it lays with me to say wether I will be happy or not — I am in such a kind of a *Ship* that a good Pilot is *all* that is necessary to stear clear. Although storms breakers and every other danger surround *him.* But while I think of my own dangers, and of my own *pleasures* in my literary pursuit, let me remain insensible to those of my beloved friend — God grant that his happiness may be as extensive as the *Vast Ocean* which he traverses, and commencurate with existence

Excuse this Blot — I have not time to copy it, or else it should be done —

" I am yours sincerely and affectionately
Benjamin Peirce

"NB. I might have said — excuse the whole letter —"

From Benjamin Peirce to his sister Sally:

"Cambridge Sept 1797

"Dear Sister,

Did you really say "I might expect" a visit from you to Cambridge? Don't disappoint me then — for you may well think I shall put much dependence upon it — Indeed I know you would not give me to great encouragements, unless you intended to gratify me.

"George gives me (as it's natural to suppose) a very flattering account of your arms — however, making allowance for his partiality, I don't hesitate to set them down for *beautiful* I congratulate you on your being set at liberty —

"I feel myself much hurt on hearing of Mrs. Rogers' intention of moving out of town — however I hope it will turn out only 'talk' *He* may go, if he pleases; provided he'll only leave *her.*

"I hear of your progress in your work, I feel much pleased with it — I should like too, if you'd inform me a little about your books Let me advise you to allot some portion of your time to reading — not romances or novels — but good authors, such as the Spectator, Fitzosborns letters, the rambler & such like prose authors — also of the poets works, Pope's, young's Thompson's, Milton's & all which, I suppose, you may obtain or loan at Mr. Dabney's — The expense will be triffling, and the advantages very great, — indeed, indispensable, if you wish to enjoy that *pleasure* which arises from a cultivation of the best & *infinitely* the most noble part of man, or woman — I mean

the *mind* — Peruse the authors with attention — let not once reading any one of them suffice difficulties undoubtedly arise in reading any authors — But don't let one difficulty nor two discourage you — They'll all vanish in time — One author will explain another and everything at last will be plain & simple — As for me I seldom take hold of any book, but what I find some difficulties or other I likewise have the satisfaction to find them continually vanishing and I don't dispair of finally overcoming them all — Can I be of any service to you in such an undertaking? Most heartily then will I engage. — If, in your next, you will inform how your time is employed I will endeavour to form some plan, by which it might be *useful* and entertaining to both of us — Let me first promise, that if you should enter into such a method, and should allot some of your hours every day to reading you won't think them *least advantageously* improved & you'll never hereafter regret it. — The *field* of science is of immense extent — the most we can gain is but a little *corner* in it Yet one, who has once attain'd to that little *corner,* has the whole open, (as it were) before him, & enjoys a free air, unconfined within the narrow limits, which ignorance (with its usual attendants) vanity, self-conceit & a thousand foolish impertinences would necessarily prescribe — I assure you I shall take the greatest pleasure in assisting to the improvement of your taste & judgment — And I flatter myself you will not disregard whatever proposal I shall make considering that they are dictated by friendly views & a sincere regard to your best *interests* — answer this as soon as you can — no more for the present —

"Adieu, yours sincerely & Affectionately
Benjamin Peirce

"Don't let anything deter you from doing what I above recommended — you can work well enough and as I observed *reading* is the utmost importance to discharge rightly the duties of any sphere in life — Can one do for anything without cultivating the mind? and can *that* be effected without reading?

"If there's anything in this letter which you may not thoroughly understand — let me know in your next and I'll endeavour to explain it —

"Yours
B. P.

"Write by Forrester who carries this — I pray you —"

From G. Nichols to B. Peirce 1797.

"Mescandna 18th Nov 1797

"Dear Benjamin

this my first serves to inform You that we shall sail from this place tomorrow for the Isle of France. and from thence to some Part of India or China. and can say I feel pleased with the Voyage. only the fear of being plundered by the French Pirats which surround this coast. but trust we shall not be taken by an inferior force to ourselves.

"doubtless before now You have paid a visit to Your good friends in Salem. which I think must have been a verry agreeable one, particularly among the young Ladies, whose Company I am extremely sorry to be deprived of so long. but must commit them to your care, and trust nothing will be neglected by you, when in Salem to promote their happiness, and hope to have the pleasure to see you in 15 or 16 months from this; which is too long almost for me to look for and too there is no certainty of enjoyment equal to that of being in company with such an agreeable society of Young Ladies. as I was acquainted with during my short tarry in Salem.

"I have only to wish Benjamin that my Ship was like yours, where peace and happiness, always attend those who wish it, instead of trouble, and anxiety and fatigue, and in short every thing which will serve to make life miserable which is realy the case with a seafaring life.

"make my best respects to all enquiring Friends, and hope this will find you with Your esteemd Father, Sisters and Brothers with all our Connexions enjoying the blessing of health in as great a degree as I have since leaving Salem.

"and that the best of Heavens blessings may attend yourself and all of them through life are the Prayr's of your Sincere

"Friend

George Nichols"

From Benjamin to his sister Betsy:

Cambridge Feb. 26, 1798

"Dear Betsy,

I must remember my little sister, one with whom I used to take so much pleasure. My expectations of you, I assure you, are highly raised. It gives me much happiness to think how fond you are of

books. I hope you continue to like them, and to peruse them with attention. If you cultivate this taste of yours, you never will regret it and you will find that your pleasure will increase, in proportion to the acquisitions which you make. How desirable must it be to have the mind so formed by study, that it is capable of relishing the beauties of nature and art! Perhaps, my little dear, I don't speak so that you can fully understand me. You recollect that little story in the 'Tales of the Castle' of the miss who was sick and was obliged to live in a barn; you remember too the doctors daughter — what a difference there was between them! One was a fretful, peevish, disagreable girl; — the other was mild, amiable and pleasing. What was the reason? Madamoizelle was ignorant, she had not been taught to observe the beauties which surrounded her, she was attentive to nothing but her dress, her pleasures were cloying and therefore her mind must have been continually racked with such cares and disappointments as to cross her temper and render her unhappy. But let us look of the other little miss, and what was the cause of her happiness? She had studies, she had her little imagination refined, she tasted the sweets of the fields and her mind was soften'd by a frequent contemplation of the delightful objects of nature. She observed the birds as they sung, how enraptured was she! how did she wish herself that sweet temper which they seemed to discover! She did not envy Delphon's all the pleasures which she took at the balls — Oh! no! they were beneath her notice. The mind of Pulcheria, (for I think this was the name of the Doctor's daughter) was taken up, in listening to the sweet notes which warbled throu the fields. No wonder, there, that she was so seldom ruffled with passion, and that her disposition was so sweet and happy. Is not this sufficient to invite any one to study? I hope by and by to see you another Pulcheria, to be able to call every plant, every tree, every animal by its proper name, and to enjoy every object which nature presents to your view — but I must close, my little dear although I have not done half what I wish to. I have only mentioned one small part of study, that of nature, and of this I have only spoken of the pleasures which you will receive from a knowledge of it, without pointing out any of the means by which you may acquire it, — but if I have opportunity I will endeavour in another letter to lead you into a way. As the study of nature is what I think to be of most consequence to you at present, I shall not trouble you with the mention of any other studies. I have been reading some

numbers in the Spectator on the 'Pleasures of the Imagination' — when you come to be a little older you will peruse them. Write me when Sally does, and give me the moral of some story you have been reading.

"I am your loving brother
Benj Peirce

"P.S. If there is any thing in this letter too hard for you to understand, Sally will explain it to you."

From Benjamin Peirce to his sister Sally.

"Cambridge May 9 1798

"Dear Sister,

Perhaps you may think it a little strange that I should begin so soon. But I dare say you can guess my business. I understand the Spring ships have arrived — I therefore wish you would make me a gown so soon, that I may have it with the return of the next trunk of clothes which I shall send home to be washed — Be sure to let it be by all means neat, modest and (I can't help saying) small figured —As to my stockings, upon my word, Sally, they are worse than I thought for — If it would not take too much of my time I would describe them one by one — In general terms, except 2 or 3, they are hardly *decent* — If you would not wish to be at the trouble of buying any & the *risk* of pleasing me (for *you* say I am very difficult, and sir is willing, I will look out some in Boston myself. — You will not disappoint me in the gown, because you know I shall very soon be in great want of it —

"In reading one volume of Rollins I have met with women brave, virtuous & wise One in particular named Artemise. This was a woman, I think, of Asia minor a queen too of a place called Caria, in alliance with the Persians — The latter, having made war against the Grecians & queen Artemisia distinguished herself so much in a naval engagement, that Xerxes king of Persia said that "the men had become women & the women men" — But what pleased me as much as anything was the observation of the Historian on one Leona, who suffered exquisite tortures, rather than reveal the secrets of her *Lords,* Harmodius & Aristogitan, who had been the deliverers of Greece from tyranny (before Christ 514 years) He says, "this showed that women, contrary to the *general* reproach which is cast upon them, are capable of keeping secrets." I might mention several others, who have done

honour to *science* to *virture* & to *human nature;* and on the other hand, those, whose names, it could be wished had been blotted from remembrance — I assure you Rollins Ancient History is very entertaining & instructive and I cannot but recommend it to your perusal — Tho' I think every part of it ought to be attended to, yet I would advise you to study *diligently* the characters of the different persons you meet with there especially those of your own sex, as being infinitely more advantageous to you than anything you can collect from History. If you can get it conveniently of Aunt Nichols, I would advise you to; for mine will be wanted *here* —

"I hope the first letter I receive from you will bring me Lydia's I shall send this next Saturday (May 12th) unless I have an opportunity before — and in a *week* from then, if you have Lydia's, be sure & inclose it in a letter of yours by the post, unless you have an opportunity *before* to send it direct to Cambridge — my chief reason for wishing it to be sent on Saturday, is that myself or some from College will be over on that day — Well, I think I have drawn my letter out, by this time, to a pretty tedious length — *all* I have to do now is to get you to excuse the numerous errors it contains, for you know I'm a blun—d— All? I still *have* to do what I ought to be the most *proud* of, to *subscribe* myself

"Your brother

Benjamin Peirce

"P.S. Give my best respects & love to our friends, especially to those of our own *household,* to you I send *greetings,* written with my own hand, the most affectionate of the

"Brotherhood,

"Benj

"Beg of Sir to excuse my not writting to him. It is impossible for me to pick up anything that can be interesting to him."

"Cambridge May 20 1798
Sunday

"Dear Sister,

Tho' I take a great deal of pleasure in writting you, I should not have done it 'till I had received your answer to my other, if I were not obliged to. However I excuse your not favouring me yet, presuming that you have not received the *one* which I wished to have *inclosed.*

I am fully persuaded that there is no want of disposition in you to render me happy.

"I have heard today one of the best discoveries that I ever did in my life. It was delivered by the excellent Dr. Morse; and, if possible, I was more pleased with him for his being a *favourite* of yours; for I had already conceived a high opinion of him on *that account.*

"Now about my *gown* — I don't know but I mention'd before the manner in which I would wish to have it made; but lest I did not I would just beg of you to let it be made large enough *everyway,* to put strings in the *very ends* of the sleeves to give it a cape, and above all to let it have, in the *purchase,* what it will not be in *your* power to give it afterwards, & *without which* it will not be in *my* power to like it, *neatness* of figure & *modesty* of colour. Prepare for a transition.

"Cambridge is a very pleasant place. I think there are some prospects here more beautiful than I ever saw before. I took a walk yesterday in a part of the town which was new to me, and which to the charms of *novelty* added all the beauties of *nature.* A delightful variety of scenes, rising in the most *happy* succession, met the *eye* and kept the soul *awake.*

(Another of the same kind of figures)—

"My chum & I with two or three others talk of cutting our hair off *close.* The way we had thought of proceeding was this — In and on that day all the other classes will be exempted from study. *Then,* we proposed, that as many of us as *entered the lists,* should meet at one of the scholars rooms, and *a'la mode Francoise,* make one piece of work of it; after which we should celebrate the day in a manner *adapted* to the *important* occasion — But to be *serious,* I really have thoughts of cutting my hair off & would wish to have your opinion upon the matter — Your *opinion* upon the matter did I say? I beg leave to recall it — for upon my soul, if you answer all the nonsense I have written you I sha'nt receive a single word of *your own* . . .

"I was just going to say — do inclose this letter when you write me — For Heaven's sake don't let me contradict what I have a moment before asserted, "that there's no want of disposition in you to render me happy."

"I shall show that I have a *disposition* to keep *you* from your happiness if I cease any longer to subscribe myself,

"Your brother
"Benjamin Peirce

"note — *A la mode Francoise,* is, in French fashion —
"Saturday)
May 26) I send you the following clothes — Viz

6 shirts	)	all which you will please to
6 neck	)	send in a week from this day
3 pocket d"	)	excepting however, the woolen
1 head d"	)	stocking & bags —
2 towels	)	
5 pair stock	)	

"I send you also a large quanity of love to be disposed of among yourself & others —

"B. P —
—"The chief of the gowns worn by the scholars are small figures.)"

From G. Nichols to B. Peirce.

"Salem September 1800

"Dear Benj

Your letter of the 30th Ultum as was handed me on the Same evening. Your not writing me before I can readily excuse knowing that you must be busily employd most of the time upon your sundries together with a frequent letter to your Anna L. M. Nichols I hope You will pardon me for much the same reasons. You may be assured Benja that my only reasons for not writing before is for want of an opportunity. I have scarsely been able to call one minute my own since I saw you the Ship active of which I have the command has now all her cargo aboard. and if warm weather permits shall sail the day after tomorrow for England and thence to Calcutta which voyage I hope to accomplish in 12 or 13 months. I have been flatterring myself with the happiness of seeing you in Cambridge before my departure but I am sorry to say I cant see any prospect of it now although I shall certainly expect to see you in this town. The idea of having seen any excellent Friends for so long a time is certainly very disagreeable to me although my prospect is quite as good as I could wish. Your wishes for my Prosperity and Happiness may long attend You is the wish of your Friend and Affectionate Cousin

"George Nichols

"NB I have no news worth communicating only that all our Friends continue to Enjoy perfect health which I hope is the case with you. doubtless you have been informed of Uncle Leach's being in Difficulty

having been detected inmining Goods at Woburn at Carolina, he has not writen any particulars but from his own letters we have reasons to think he will loose his vessel and Cargo. Your amiable Sister Joins me with her love to you. Adeiu my Friend should I not see you again I am too lazy to copy this now.

George"

Letter from Benj. Peirce to his younger brother Henry.

"Salem, Oct. 12, 1804

"Dear Henry,

The past storm is said to be the most voilent ever experienced in this town. Never was the wind known to have done such execution. Chimneys & fences were blown down; trees broken off, or torn up by the roots; & all the vessels in the harbor, not excepting even one, were driven from their moorings. Many are not injured; a few suffered more or less. The *Friendship* had the day before the storm been carried round into Salem harbor to be repaired. She now lies away up in a cove in Southfields, but I believe has suffered no injury. Mr. Gray has only one chimney standing in his house; & one of Captn. West's weeping willows was so bowed down with grief (probably on account of Madam's absence) that, being unable longer to support itself, it fell prostrate on the fence, which it crushed to pieces with its weight.

"You must write me very soon & very often. Answer this the first opportunity you have. Inform me of your health, of your situation, of your class mates, of your studies, &c.&c. If you wish assistance in any study, or advice in any matter, propose your question to me without reserve; you may be sure I shall not be remiss in my endeavors to assist you. Were I to offer any general rule of conduct & of study, I should say; conduct as your own good sense dictates, & apply yourself to study as much as is consistent with health, with sociability, & with . . . Fuller is in town & takes charge of this letter. I depend on your answer immediately. Yours affectionately, Benj. Peirce.

"P. S. We are all in good health"

The Family Collections include a letter from a Bank in Boston written when Henry Peirce was grown, offering him a job as "Second Book-keeper"; and a letter to his widow Catherine Calista, "Aunty Peirce," written forty years after in 1863, sending her one quarter's salary "of your late husband" at $275.

Sally's young husband Captain George was obliged to leave her only one month after they "went to housekeeping" following their marriage in November 1801. In the years following Sally's marriage she kept a sporadic diary.* This diary was kept with temperament rather than system; however, such entries as there are are daily, even the year is frequently not given, and there are evidently long lapses. Still this journal is on the whole sufficiently interesting to be quoted in full in the supplementary material and here I give a brief condensation. The diary, kept roughly from the beginning of the year 1802 to the latter part of the year 1803, concerns such homely details as family visitings, drinking tea, attending meetings on each Sabbath, observing her very own state of health and spirits, experiencing and noting the weather in its infinite varieties — all these made her days.

"*Monday, 5 April* Pleasant . . . spent the forenoon at home with sister Lydia, very unhappy and unwell. We rode out in the afternoon. I drank tea at my father's, walked out in the evening to the shops and bought one pair of shoes and a hat ribbon, 8 cents, called on Mrs. Rust and settled with her for the rent of her house which was 10 and ¾ months $89.75.

"*Wednesday April 6* Lowery in the morning but soon grew pleasant: (family visitings as usual) contributed for the charitable society.

"*Sunday 8 May* A cold storm began about noon . . . the wind NE and continued until night.

"*Wed. 11th May* Went to my home after breakfast and tarried until teatime; very busily employed with a woman cleaning my house. Returned at my father's. Father Nichols spent part of the evening with us.

"*Monday 16th* Wind NE AM S.W. PM After breakfast I went to my mother's (No doubt her mother Nichols, since her own mother S. Ropes Peirce had died previous to her wedding.) To assist Lydia in sewing . . I received a letter in the afternoon from my husband.

"*Saturday 21* Pleasant in the wind NW. Gave a poor woman $1.10.

"*Monday, 30* Very warm and pleasant. The wind SW. I walked out after breakfast to the shops . . . I received two letters from my husband, one from Dover, the other from London.

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* This diary may be read in original (although it appears not to be complete) in the Peabody Museum.

"Tuesday, 31 Rainy weather . . . the wind SW. I spent the day at my father's very unhappily.

"Monday, 13 June Pleasant till towards night. It grew foggy, the wind easterly . . . Hannah Manning agreed to live with me when called for at $7 and a quarter. This day her wages commence.

"Monday 27 Lowery and rainy in the morning with the wind East, which shifted about noon to South and the weather grew pleasant. Spent the day at my father's. Sally Leach spent the day with us in tailoring.

"Thursday 30th Very warm — the wind SW. Spent the day at my father's very stupidly. Took a charming bathing in the evening.

"Friday July 1st Very warm . . the wind SW. Spent the forenoon at my father's, the afternoon at my mother's (Mother Nichols) was made happy with news from my friend.

"Sunday July 3 Pleasant though cool for the season, with the wind NE. Went to meeting. Mr. Biglow preached from the 8th Verse in the 4th Chapter of the Epistles. First Epistle to Timothy and from the 33 and 34th Verses in the 7th Chapter of Luke. I spent Monday the intervals of the day at my father's in painful anxiety."

Sally's husband was absent from her nineteen months. The end of July 1803 he returned and a few entries in her diary during one happy month of his visit reflect her contentment. But she writes again on:

"Saturday August 27, 1803 "My husband left me about 10 o'clock A.M. for Europe alone and almost in despair. Brother Ben called in the afternoon. Sister Lydia came and Betsy called in the evening, and about 10 o'clock my husband returned for a few hours. Sister Lydia lunched at our house. I was quite unwell all day.

"Sunday 28 August Pleasant. About half past 4 A.M. my husband left me again. I spent the day at home very gloomily.

"Friday 2 Lowery in the forenoon . . spent the day at home with sister Lydia. Brother David (Nichols) spent the afternoon with us. Walked out in the evening at Father Nichols and Peirce's. Very unhappy and a little unwell . . .

"Wednesday 5 In the afternoon I was engaged in moving . . .

"Thursday 6 Removed to my new habitation.

"Sunday, September 11 Went to Meeting . . . . returned home quite depressed . . .

"*Monday, 3rd* Walked out in evening to my father's who waited on me home . . .

"*Saturday 29th* Spent the day at home very stupidly . . . In the evening my father called. I bought for myself lining and trimmings.

And so again the days pass with the family visitings, drinking tea, attending Meeting, observing and experiencing the weather and her own moods in their infinite varieties. In late November the diary closes with her last entry on November 20, 1803. She was expecting her first child at this time and through a statement of her husband George, never from Sally herself, we learn that Sally experienced much illness in a difficult pregnancy. The child, a daughter Sarah, was born in April 1804 considerably before her husband's return from his last voyage on July 31, 1804.

The family collection includes only a few letters to Sally from her husband. The first of the letters quoted below is undated — yet holds an especial interest for its mention of the painting of George's miniature done in London on his first trip, after his marriage evidently to console Sally for his absence. This miniature sent home to George's bride in the year 1802 is a treasured family possession today:

"London

"Dear Sally,

I hope you will pardon my not writing you more frequently since my arrival in this country when I inform you that my business has alone prevented me however. I trust this will be acceptable. I have nothing in particular to Communicate further than the intentions of my present Voyage, which will be from this to Madeira & from thence to India and I hope to leave this confused City tomorrow but I shall have the pleasure of meeting you in Salem, it is almost impossible for me to calculate, but provided nothing impedes my progress I hope to be with you about next Christmas but don't think me out of time if it should be longer, neither condemn me as you did on my last voyage to Russia for fixing the time longer than you calculated, but you must be convinced my dear Girl, my anxiety to see you must be great, however, we must endeavor to make ourselves as happy as possible during our absence from each other, and endeavor to console yourself for my absence by viewing sometimes the most valuable, although trifling, present which is in my power to send you accompanying this letter which I hope will be handed you in due time and don't doubt

but you will have the goodness to accept it, although agreeable to your request I have not added respectfulness; the painting is thought by those who have seen as being good, and I hope your Ideas will correspond with these in considering it a likeness but I think it too handsome, however I have endeavored to employ the best artist I could find in this City. I have enjoyed myself quite as well as I expected since I saw you and I expect to have desirable pleasant voyage after I leave this country. I have enjoyed my health very well, excepting the Teeth Ache . . . I am sorry to say that my Voyage has been uniformly unfortunate, at present it is uncertain, when my cargo will be landed, it will be either here or at Holland which I shall determine in for 2 days, but when ever it may be I shall return with all possible speed to the arms of her whom I adore and heaven grant never more to be separated. Ambition is the only cause of our unhappiness in this life; how much more happy would be my lot to live with my Friend in a lonely cottage, earning a substance by the swet of my brow, than to be accumulating abundence by sailing to Forreign Clim'es. I hope these ideas will ever make a deep impression on my mind, if so, there is a probability we may never more separate. Your good self my Friend, I am confident your Ideas in this respect is not different from mine, for why should we distress ourselves for others, let us live for ourselves and we maybe happy indeed. I look upon the world at large with that indifference. My lengthy epistle may tire you, for which reason and the want of time I must conclude, with requesting you to make my best respects to our Dear Parents, Sisters, and all Friends, hoping most earnestly this finds your good self with them all in good health. I beesech you to be careful of yourself, which neglect will be unpardonable by him who subscribes himself Your truly affectionate Friend N. B. I cannot as yet say very accurately when I shall be with you but I expect in June.

"I shall write again very soon.

G. Nichols"

Last letter written home to Sally before George's final return in summer of 1804.

"Emden, 31 Dec., 1803

"My Dear Friend,

"Although it is not in my power to embark for Home at this time, I am happy in being able to dispatch my Good Ship, but when I

shall follow is not in my power to say further than that as soon as I can close my business I shall quit this inhospitable place.

"I send by Captain Slocum some of my articles as in the enclosed Memorandum but am sorry it has not been in my Power to preserve all those you wanted but I shall endeavor to make up the deficiency myself. I have been favored with one letter from Your Dear Self of the 22 Sept. which afforded me much happiness. I hope shortly to be favored with others. I have repeatedly written from hence, from Holland, and shall continue to write by every opportunity, most earnestly do I hope this will meet you with all Friends in as perfect health as I am at this time. I have nothing new to offer, further than of my business, which is not flattering. I fear My Voyage will not prove lucrative, although, attended with disappointments you will get every information from my Father respecting my business.

"I was never more desirous, than I am now, that this shall be my last Voyage should my little Property arrive safe in America. I am much determined in tarrying at home with my amiable Friend.

"William Ashton is in Holland to sail for home in a few days, my Friend Wm. Silsbee left Rotterdam about 4 weeks hence he is gone to Lisbon from thence to India, a very agreeable correspondence I had with this friend for some weeks, he particularly enquired of the health of my Partner.

"I have directed Captain Slocum to send my boy John home even should he not stop into Salem I would advise to have him decently clothed and put to a School during my absence.

"You will inform Lydia that as I have not been able to preserve the different articles of furniture that I have not send her particular account why it is not in my power to write her, tell Benjamin if he is marryed in my absence, there will be some difficulties with me when I return, not having to observe, excepting my Best respects to all Friends, & with Sincere affections am Yours

Geo. Nichols"

On board the *Active* 1 Jan. 1804

"Most heartily do I wish this may be a happy New Year to my Dear Friend — It is realy the happyest day with me (on a/c of business) I have seen this Voyage as my ship is now ready to depart, it will probably go down the River this day, how happy should I be was I to return home in her — I shall endeavor to find a good ship to

take passage in when my Business is settled, which I hope will be in 6 or 8 weeks, then the weather will beam pleasanter, not so great as Risky in crossing the ocean as at this season.

"Adieu once more
my Dear amiable . . . .
"Wishing you the choisest of Heavens Bless.
G. Nichols"

The marriage of George Nichols and Sally Peirce, so happy in itself, sowed its ghostly and unhappy seed. Martha Nichols, the romantic family biographer, relates that at the close of the wedding ceremonies on this late November afternoon Jerathmiel, overcome with a feeling of loneliness in parting with his much-loved older daughter, suggested to the younger Betsey that she walk with him in the fresh air of a large unfinished room at the top of the house. As they walked he told Betsey that she should have as beautiful a wedding as that of her sister, and that this room should then be as exquisitely carved and finished for her.

Betsey, however, clung to her father, replying that she would never leave him, married or single. "Will you take a vow to that effect?" asked her troubled father, and she replied "I, Betsey, will never leave my father." The determined words rang through the howling wind of the storm outside . . . The years passed, and Betsey, vivacious and beautiful, was sought by many young men. But on the eve of matrimony, Martha reports that she quarreled with her lover. She was not married until in her older years she married her brother-in-law, George Nichols, after Sally's death.

The "Lovers' Quarrel" told in a number of versions in the family annals is given by Martha as some ghostly foundation for the subsequent history of this house. For the House became known as "The House of the Maidens" descending in inheritance to one generation of family spinsters after another, all of whom died there unmarried. In Martha's romantic language "Cupid passed by this house with drooping wings and averted eyes."

For Jerathmiel himself this day November 22, 1801 must indeed have been a most significant "landmark"; while the years preceding had brought family tragedies in the death of his oldest and greatly beloved son Joseph in the year 1794, and that of his beloved wife, Sarah, a year later, — he may well have seen this most fortuitous

marriage of his daughter Sally to the handsome and successful son of his best friend, as a new and happy beginning.

For Jerathmiel himself these years following the marriage would appear the halcyon ones. His daughter Betsey was ever with him at home. His eldest child married so favorably to the most successful young son of his closest friend and brother-in-law Ichabod Nichols; and moreover a son-in-law to his own heart, already at 24 years a successful merchant-captain, his future assured. His own oldest son, distinguished in his Harvard career — married a lovely and close young relative Lydia Nichols. In 1807 he wrote to his younger son at Harvard congratulating him on his part at the Graduation:

"Salem, July 14, 1807

"Dear Henry:

With pleasure and much satisfaction I re.d yours of the 3 inst. and should have answered it before had I known of an opportunity direct . . . its gratifying to me being acquainted the government having Conferred that Honour on you in assigning so high a part as a Lattin Oration for the next Exhibition, although I conclude its not the highest yet I suppose its the next, — I hope the subject and the proferment may Overballance the Honour Confered on you. Should nothing prevent myself with some of Our Friends will have the pleasure to attend — in that Case we should wish to have good Accomaditions for perhaps say from here six persons which number we shall be able to aportion in season — in your next you will acquaint me the day the month the Exhibition will be, at the same time let me know if any and what things you may want previous to that time. I have the pleasure further to acquaint you that within this Ten days your sister Bettsy has been mending for the better very much & at present have no doubt she will be to the Exhibition. Can we be greatfull Enough to God for his great goodness — I shall give your Brothers & sisters, with your Uncle & Aunt Nichols an invitation together with Our Cousins to attend the Exhibition and you will Invite any one you may think proper to dine with us but we must know how many in season in Order for Accomadition. In the meantime I remain your

"Affectionate Father

"P.S. I Observe you made no mention of any further supply of money — lest you may be in want before a good Opportunity presents,

I now Inclose you Ten Dollars, which I flatter myself you will make good use of

Yours &c J. P."

We have few letters from Jerathmiel's hand at this period — perhaps indeed he was too happily occupied with his home, his garden, and his family to write! But we do have a happy reminder of what the peaceful family "breaking of bread" may have been in the recitation of this simple blessing for his family table:

"We ask Thy blessing O God on this portion of Thy bounty — Wilt thou pity those who need the mess that we enjoy and bless Thine unworthy creatures for Christ's sake." This benign family prayer seems to suit the meaning of the name, "Jerathmiel — Loved of God."

From all accounts the garden appears to have been Jerathmiel's most loved occupation; no doubt it furnished him most helpful exercise, relaxation and an object of his devotion. It was he who planned the general form of the garden, with its brick walk leading straight between the box hedges down to the river and its important and significant landing. His friend, young Samuel McIntire, may well have aided and advised with the garden's planning, but no doubt it was left entirely to Jerathmiel to carry out the plan, to plant the vines and bushes, and to order the decorative wooden arch thought to have been carved by McIntire himself.

The particular pride of Jerathmiel's planning and care appear to have been two mulberry trees which grew and flourished through the years, bearing their blossoms and fruit as a final delicacy and delight for the family and neighborhood children. But every growth in the garden appears to have been dear to its owner and devoted gardener.

An interesting article appearing in the Salem Gazette for June 2, 1809 further attests to Jerathmiel's profound interest in his garden, and its care and condition:

"TEN DOLLARS REWARD

Whereas some vile, unprincipled person, entered the yard of the subscriber on the night of the 15th inst., and maliciously broke the branch of a running Vine, pulled up and carried off the roots belonging to the same. Anyone that will give information of the wretch so that he may receive punishment justly due to such an offender will receive the above reward.

JERATHMIEL PEIRCE"

But not only the founder Jerathmiel loved this garden deeply; in every generation up to the present time, there have been those who have left their written testimony to its beauty. A granddaughter writes:

"This is a spot where you love to linger and dream and call up the years that have gone, peopling it again with shadowy forms, some of them long before your day, of whom you have only heard, but who have such a hold on your imagination, you seem to see them.

"Reluctantly you leave this land of visions and climb the steps slowly and dreamily, when you are roused by the interesting aspect of the garden side of the barns. The three lower windows are arched, the closed wooden shutters showing either H or L hinges, or long hinges stretching nearly the entire width. In one of the second story windows are two bulls' eye panes of glass, the only one so favored, shutters which could be thrown open when light was needed evidently being considered sufficient. But these windows of various shapes, frame the stately arched doorway dominated by its keystone, and through the opening you catch a fascinating glimpse of one of the seven doors of the house with the trunk of the black walnut tree not many feet away."

Another granddaughter of the same generation, Martha Nichols, wrote of this garden:

"Its orderly days have passed, when my grandparents and Aunts loved to work in it, with the help of an elderly gardener, who felt it his special pride and delight.

"It is true, flowers still bloom in borders and beds alike grow luxuriantly too, yet notwithstanding the care that is given, they will work their own sweet will, and wander into forbidden paths appearing suddenly and independently in a corner, where they belong makes no difference, the experiment is repeated again. There is an especially privileged flower, however, which no one pretends to keep within bounds, — the cupid's delight travels far and wide in sunlight and shade alike, looking up at you with bright, friendly faces as if sure of love in return. From time immemorial this old garden has been its home, and always will remain so.

"The setting of the house emphasizes its loveliness, standing as it does far enough back from the street to admit of box-bordered beds,

oval and square, filled with flowers from the middle of February when the snow-drops push up their brave little heads close under the eaves, followed by crocuses, silver bells, flowering almond pyrrus, Japonica, Solomon's seal, lilies of the valley, and large beds of day lilies blooming at the foot of the pyrrus japonica, while the old house looks benignantly down and receives its homage of beauty. In my childhood a stalwart bigonia vine climbed up the front of the house and from its scarlet trumpet-flowers seemed to call out a welcome to all friends far and near. I can remember lattices placed over the parlor windows to which the creeper clung, the flowers glowing warmly against the white house.

"But the front yard cannot claim all the beauty for at the West beyond the brick walk stretches a lawn, protected by chains connected at short intervals by low wooden posts, leaving an open space opposite the side door for a passage-way. The glory of the lawn is a large catalpa tree, its branches bending to the ground with its wealth of blossoms in mid-summer. A large elm-tree spreads its graceful foliage at the farther end, while along the white picket fence that forms the boundary line extending from just beyond the cabinet fence on the street where the land slopes to the terraced garden cluster lilac bushes, a smaller elm tree, a vigorous young butternut, forming a curtain of greenery. Dotted here and there are shrubs, chief among them is the Tartarian honeysuckle with its redundant pink and white flowers, while in a border just inside the chains are red, pink and white rose-bushes, simply rioting in the joy of living as the buds open to the sunshine. In quieter mood further away from the street a bed of pale purple iris . . . above a bed of striped grass."

Another granddaughter of Captain George, Harriet Nichols Lamb adds her childhood impressions:

"We all know how the perfume of a flower, or the woodsy smell in a deep forest brings back an event in our lives, or the picture of scenes, which have almost faded from our memory. The pungent odor of the dwarf box, or suffruticosa, recalls to me the many happy hours, when as a child I wandered through the walks, and touched with finger tips the lovely flowers which bloomed from early Spring until the Autumnal winds stripped all of leaves. Standing back from the street, a large Colonial house in the old town of Salem invited one to enter, and in passing through, one gained a court-yard where one's

first sight of my Grandfather's garden was a unique surprise. The arbor through which to pass was lined with pots of blooming oleanders, agapanthus and the delicate musk plant, with its yellow blossoms growing in great profusion on the shelves which were hidden by the foliage. Through this vista of green and color, a terraced garden was laid out, the borders edged with box which, altho' I knew it not then, must have been copied from some Italian garden.

"The North River, which was then a clear blue stream, brought the smell of the ocean on its incoming tide, and served as a mysterious link between the new world and the old. For, holding by my Grandfather's hand, he would tell me of his voyages to the East Indies, and when, as a young man, he walked through those paths in the Summer evening with his bride, who was afterwards my Grandmother. For her, the roses were planted, the delicate blush rose, the 'moss' and 'sweet briar' and deep red or 'damask' as she called it, while from the tall foxglove and Canterbury bells, the stately lillies and the larkspur, the sound of honey-bee added another note to the lapping of the river against the garden wall. There was another wonder, a large mulberry tree which in July or August was covered with the delicate fruit, and large white sheets were laid before sundown to catch the juicy berries which fell in the night. It was so old, no one dared to climb its branches and so tall that even if one dared, the fruit could hardly be gathered in any other way. A garden without fruit would hardly be complete, and in the sunniest corner, red and white currants and raspberries ripened, and the thimble berry now almost unknown. Black currants too for the jelly so good in sickness, and the herbs so necessary in cooking, and for sprains and colds, wormwood and all mints must not be forgotten. My Grandfather was a great horticulturist, and had many a rare graft of pear and plum, but his pride was a wonderful St. Michaels pear and seckel, which were guarded as the golden apples in the garden of the Hesperides.

"Before we leave the court-yard, we stop to count the beautiful grey and white pigeons fluttering in the water which was always fresh in the tub under the old pump. They were so tame that often they would light on my arm before they flew for the night into their cozy cote. — And a sleepy child followed their example."

Disaster came to this house following the embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts in the crash of 1826. Ichabod Nichols and his sons

experienced the disaster of failure as did Jerathmiel and his son Benjamin. It was an inevitable doom most painful but foreseen by many. The age of steam was not far off; the age of sail was waning. Salem Harbor was gradually filling with silt and sand, so preventing boats of any size coming up to their wharves.

This was an inevitable doom but the blow appears to have affected Jerathmiel most adversely. Perhaps because of his having come to Salem an unknown boy, and having built the house which proudly symbolized his rise in the world, his pride suffered the most severe defeat. Jerathmiel felt obliged to sell his house to satisfy his creditors, and although the house was most considerately bought by a devoted family friend, George Johannot, Jerathmiel never entered the portals or the garden again. He is said to have averted his eyes from the beloved homestead whenever his walks took him that way.

He went to live with Sally and her husband; his son, Benjamin, showed the most solicitous affection toward his broken father. From Cambridge where Benjamin had entered a new field as College Librarian after the business failure, he wrote the following letter of filial affection and anxiety to his brother-in-law, George:

Cambridge, May 29, 1827

"Dear Brother:

I learn from Mr. Pickering that you & he had been speaking to my father about leaving his house & taking up his abode with you, and that it affected him very disagreeably. I expected it would. There is nothing I have dreaded so much as the necessity of making such a proposition to him. I dreaded it, because I knew he must be very much attached to the house he built himself & which he has occupied so many years, & because I was afraid he would have some other feelings, which, if he could look into the hearts of his children & friends, and see things with the eyes of other people, he would be convinced there was not the least foundation for. I knew, however, that Sir had a great deal of philosophy & firmness, & I believed that his reason would prevail over his feelings in this instance as it has uniformly done through the course of a long life. Still the thought of the pain, which the struggle would cost him, has given & still gives me a great deal of uneasiness. It depresses me at times so much that I can hardly act with that vigour which my situation requires. There is nothing I would not do to save my father's feelings. But after all, why need

he lay it so much to heart? If he lives with you he will have everything to make his situation comfortable; he will be surrounded with his children & grandchildren, who will all vie with each other in their attentions to him & in their endeavours to make him cheerful & happy. He speaks, I understand, of the unpleasantness of being *dependant* — I wish, as I observed before, Sir could look into the feelings of his children, he would no longer harbour any imaginations of that sort — Dependant? On whom? — My feelings will not suffer me to dwell any longer on this point — I consider my father *entitled* to everything I have, or ever shall have. Nothing could hurt my feelings more than for him to think that he was laid under any obligation to me by anything I could do for him as long as I live. I am not only desirous of doing every thing for him I can, but I am in the strictest sense *bound* to do it; and I am certain that the views & feelings of his other children upon this point correspond with my own. I hope, therefore, Sir will never permit that thought to enter his mind again. It will always be our greatest pleasure to do for him.

"There is another point upon which I think it likely my father may have some sensibility. He always had a good deal of ambition. I mean that laudable ambition which stimulated him to activity in his business, to endeavour to rise in the world, to give his children a good education etc. He may perhaps fancy that his consequence is diminished, & will be still further diminished if he leaves that house. I do not believe any such thing — I believe my father is now of as much consequence, not only in the eyes of his friends, but of the public, as he ever was, & will always be treated with just as much respect. His character will indeed stand higher than it ever did — and why? Because he has withstood the temptations incident to misfortune. Though his character was before irreproachable, yet in the eyes of all reflecting men, this circumstance alone will raise it very much.

"My father thinks hard, I suppose, (tho' I do not know) of the creditors for not making an arrangement by which he could retain the house. I was in hopes they would, & for a long time believed they would; but I must confess I do not see very well how they are to be complained of for deciding otherwise. They look at the place with all the buildings, & the establishment strikes them as far too large for so small a family. At any rate I am persuaded it is not from any want of regard or of kind feelings to my father, that they determine as they do. I think the treatment we have received from the creditors

generally gives us abundant reason to be satisfied with them, & it would give me the greatest pleasure to be able at some future day to pay them all the arrearage.

"I hope my father will continue to use that philosophy which he has hitherto practised — and not only practised, but so often inculcated upon his children. For my own part, I consider myself bound, not only as a Christian, but as a rational being, to bear all the trials of life with fortitude & patience; and as my father possesses much more of both these virtues than I do, I feel the strongest assurance that he will give his children the heartfelt satisfaction of seeing him resigned, cheerful & happy. No object (and I am persuaded I express the feelings of all his children) no object will ever be dearer to me than my father's comfort.

"Mr. Pickering consulted me since the arrival of the ship about the winding up of the affairs — I told him I had only one wish upon the subject, & that was, that everything should be managed as to save my father's feelings as much as possible. In this object I am sure you will fully accord with me.

"I am, truly & affectionately,
Yours
Benj Peirce"

But Benjamin's hopes for the return of his father's health and spirit were vain. He died two months after, still grieving; in an understanding and intimate family letter of condolence received by his daughter Betsey, the writer states "We know that all is ordered by a Being that cannot err, this must satisfy us . . . your father was perfectly sensible of his situation, and willing to die . . ."

FAMILY FRIENDS

Close and even ingrown as the Peirce-Nichols Family was for several generations, and even with marriages between first and double-first cousins, — this family knew a most important friendship outside the family circle — a friendship well out of the ordinary in its understanding, and its ever-ready help and succor in the several serious turns of adversity and misfortune:

George and Martha Johannot were a childless and comfortably wealthy couple. George was of French-Huguenot descent, a highly respected Salem citizen and a Justice of the Peace for many years. His wife was born a White of Salem, and was a near relative of the

Treadwell family who were to be united with the Nichols family in a later generation. Apparently George and Martha Johannot were interested in all the members of the Peirce-Nichols family; several years before the marriage of Martha's young relative, Susan Treadwell, to George Nichols, Jr., Susan was invited to stay at 80 Federal Street, so that Martha could instruct Susan in more quiet and "ladylike" ways: "If only I could teach her to close the door behind her quietly . . . in fact, to close it at all, I think I should be content," she confided to a friend; she also disapproved of young Susan constantly running around the corner to 39 Chestnut Street to call on young George Nichols and his amusing and handsome younger brother John. Actually, a strict limit was set on the lateness of the afternoon or evening hour when she might do so!

When Martha Johannot died in the year 1840, not long after the death of her husband, the house was willed back into the Nichols family — the arrangement having been made by George Johannot only allowing that his wife could live out her years there. Through the Johannot will, the house was left *in trust only* to George Nichols and his second wife Betsey Peirce Nichols, for their four unmarried daughters, and so the possession passed on to a younger generation.

Beyond the vague knowledge of the friendship of George Johannot for the Nichols-Peirce family, and the mere fact that he was for years a Justice of the Peace, we know all too little. But one of the most delightful letters from George treasured by the family is to his wife written in the year 1818, telling of his trip from Salem to New York via the stage coach, and that marvelous new Leviathan, the Steamship *Fulton*. In the mere telling of this journey, we gain the warmest insight into the observation and character of this charming and intelligent man, who knew human nature as met on this most casual journey.

"Steamship *Fulton,* May 21, 1818

"My dear Wife:

On my arrival at Boston I learned that the Steamboat leaves Norwich, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, consequently to have left Boston on Monday I should have been obliged to have passed Tuesday idly at Norwich, I therefore remained where I was and employed my time in procuring some additional papers & certificates which were recommended to me by Mr. Binney, the Navy Agent to obtain, which he thought would materially aid me in reducing the demands of

Government — I hope therefore we shall gain by the days delay, on Tuesday I departed at 5 o'clock in Company with young Mr. Chadwick of Salem (who was the only person I knew) & several others, in a good carriage & with good drivers to Providence where we took an excellent Post Chaise, extremely easy & pleasant & to my mind, not the less of either for having been made in Salem, & we then proceeded to Norwich where we arrived at 7 o'clock, a distance of 80 miles, & tho it rained all day the Journey was by no means unpleasant, as the Tavern was as good as the drivers & Carriages & the Company good as either — among them was an Englishman named Lang who I could have hugged for his encomiums on the Lee family & W. Lee in particular, to whom he had been a neighbor when living in Dorchester, he however displayed on one occasion the true John Bull by cursing the tardiness of the Drivers for reaching our destination one half hour later than usual time, on this occasion he talked and acted as unreasonably as *all passionate men do,* but in the other respect, was the Gentleman & so much in voice & expression was he like John Francis, that had I not seen his person & only heard him I could have sworn it was him. like him, he frequently uses the words 'indeed' 'is it possible' — This morning at 6 o'clock (tide not serving earlier) we embarked on board the superb Leviathan Steamboat Fulton one hundred & thirty four feet long, where everything is as comfortable as on Land, all on board are subject to regulations, noways unreasonable, but on the contrary conducive to that comfort & good order which alone renders Journeying tolerable, we had an excellent breakfast where each was attentive to the others, as a Host to his guests with not that Hoggism of manners which we experienced at Newburyport and have experienced elsewhere, therefore I have lacked nothing to render my absence unpleasant, but the absence itself, & I believe had you accompanied me you would have been at least satisfied if not pleased, what I am to meet with as I progress, time must determine — I have remarked in this boat that from the upper part of the lodging Cabins there are two brass rods projecting about 18 inches to which the curtain rod is suspended across, so that when you are about to undress, instead of being exposed to all there in the main cabin, you draw out your rod with the curtains appendant where you undress behind them unseen & on getting into bed you may draw it close as in the usual manner — while I am writing we are on our way down sound to meet about 5 or 6 o'clock, the Steam-

boat Connecticut at New Haven on board which we immediately embark & shortly after proceed to New York where they tell me we arrive about 8 o'clock tomorrow morning. At the house where we lodged last night was a New York lady who had lost her husband in a singular manner, they had arrived at New Haven & were ashore at a Public house, from which they were called to embark on board the boat I am now in, at two o'clock in the morning. Madam, like too many other Madams, was too dilatory for the Husband; he therefore took in his hand the little baggage they had with them, told her he would go on board and she could follow with some of the other passengers, on the way she was met by a person sent to hasten her & was by him told that her husband was on board, after a considerable lapse of time, not seeing him she made inquiries after him, previously supposing he was on Deck or in some other part of the vessel, search was made but neither he nor baggage were to be found, her feelings were horrible for she naturally concluded him to be drowned. Late last night however, he reached her and stated that both the boats, the one for New York & the other for Norwich lay alongside of each other. He descended the first one expecting her soon to follow, while her attendants had conveyed her across the deck to the other one, both sailed at the same moment in opposite directions before he was aware that they were under way. He however remained not long ignorant, was put ashore & at daylight procured a carriage to recover his wife, had this been Dick C. he oughtened to have regretted the separation but ought to have extended it as wide as the Poles are asunder. Notwithstanding the rain of yesterday, I have consoled myself for its lack of comfort with the reflection that it came very seasonably after that stifling shower on Sunday, it saved me from that stifling dust so frequently discommoding to passengers & last but not least of all in the true Character of Old Briggs it saved my hat from dust which is the bitter enemy to it, while my umbrella could shelter it from wet, remember this when economizing on your beans and pea broth, by which you projected such great savings in my absence — you will now once for all, for I shall not repeat it in any future Letter, give my love to Mr. Williams & Oliver & familes & to all of our household, not omitting the Cats, the Cow & Calf & the birds, & every other living thing, and on no account Briggin, so much as to suffer the least of them to *starve* & should you get a Pig, as you will have much leisure, your time cannot be better employed than in teaching him to

wash his face & hands, to use a tooth brush with which you will furnish him together with a "Portfolio" for any purpose he may incline to apply it to & lastly instruct him to make his bed that he may be in all respects a Gentleman Pig, instead of a common Hog . . Be of good cheer, for I feel a presentiment that the greatest evil will be our separation which shall be curtailed as much as possible.

"V. affect. Husband
Geo. S. Johannot"

AFTER 1840 AND THE DEATH of both George Johannot and his wife, the house came into the possession of the George Nichols Family. Captain George Nichols, the man of the family, with his wife contributed his own character and direction to 80 Federal Street. For another 25 years the house was all important to George and he to it. Here he had taken his bride and here his second wife Betsey had been born in the 1780's.

Here at 80 Federal Street George continued improvement of the property, especially in the beloved garden. Possibly Jerathmiel's spirit and his very life need not have failed so soon had he realized that his devoted son-in-law "with the green thumb" should one day again embellish the garden!

Here again was "a sailor home from the sea" making his garden. "My father had a fine garden in Portsmouth," George reminisced, "and I was early put to work in it. I did a great deal in it and I enjoyed it, as I have ever enjoyed working a garden." Captain George it was who, with his roughened rope-worn hands, undertook the arduous forming of the green lawn which bordered the brick path in two terraces and planted the graceful pear trees, fruit bearing apples, and many low berry bushes to enhance the practical vegetable garden.

With George's continual robust and cheerful disposition and Betsey's spriteliness, the couple appeared to have made a most happy, gay and inclusive family homestead. Children and grandchildren "came home" for birthdays, Christmas and Thanksgiving and the "Fourth of July," a most important day as Grandfather George's birthday. A number of family letters and reminiscences best give the happy tone of these family days. George's devoted daughter-in-law, Susan Treadwell Nichols, ever returned with an especial happiness to her and her husband's family homes for the important days and gives her charming record:

"The younger members of the family scattered by a certain rule that all should be impartially served & entertained & when Father Nichols, like a Patriarch had invoked the Divine blessing & offered thanks we made a very merry party. At the dessert of nuts, raisins & grapes, apples & pears the family toast was drunk, "Duty to Sir & Ma'am, love to brothers & sisters, respects to guests (by name), remembrances of the necessarily absent ones, & health to myself," with a little sip of wine, cider or water, & sometimes hilariously repeated by the little children & by the elders also increasing the gaiety by sundry jokes & allusions."

An amusing story of a Thanksgiving Day of the early 1850's occurs in the reminiscences of Martha Nichols writing of

"a young brother who had come to this Grandfather's house for the family party, full of exuberant delight, and proud also of his first cloth jacket fastened with brass buttons, undertook to slide down the bannisters. An ominous scratching, as each button left its mark on the highly polished mahogany rail, startled the older sisters who watched the descent, and as the little boy reached the foot of the stairs, they all stood horror-stricken, watching the havoc that had been made . . . And then there was sorrow and dismay — but, as it seemed even to the parents just a thoughtless act of exuberant childhood, happily there was no punishment, and the scratches in time were erased as well as possible."

A curious blight seemed to fall on the beautiful male children of this John Nichols family, none of whom survived their happy childhood; but they have become in many a touching reminiscence of their father and older sisters the "Eternal Children" of this generally long-lived family.

Again the older sister, Martha Nichols, records a touching scene:

"a vision of the Fourth of July, grandfather's birthday, when old and young filled the walks, the bright dresses of the grandchildren vieing with the flowers in adding color to the scene — and always there remains the vision of this golden-haired little boy running up the path with outstretched arms, carrying a rose in his hand to his mother who sat on one of the steps. Not many weeks after that the young life

passed on, but the picture of the happy child will never be forgotten."*

And the author adds her own reminiscence of a somewhat later period, long after the death of her great-grandfather George Nichols, when still the house and the gardens had hardly changed.

I was brought at a very early age from New York by my father to call on the "Aunties" in the old house on Federal Street. They would meet me and the family children at their broad, hospitable door with their "wisp of a kiss"; then the children's hurrying feet would take them down the descending garden path to the river where great-grandfather's ship had docked, only a trickling stream to be sure in this later day, but it fed the childish imagination. Then there would be the climb up the green terraced lawn again, but stopping on the way to sniff the fragrance of the low-growing sweet mignonette and the red rose climbing over the arch. Still, no matter how low one stooped over the garden beds, he must spring up suddenly to breathe deeply of that cool, pungent salt in the air — then deeper yet, wondering and seeking for the scent of spice, borne on the wind of the imagination from ancient India.

But the old "Aunties," with their parchment white faces surrounded by the translucent halo of hair, and with the deep, dark and loving eyes for all "us children," would be waiting on our return with tea in the cool, high rooms. And here we would sip gingerly and decorously the hot, amber-colored fluid and trace, fascinated, the dark blue design at the bottom of each cup of blue Canton, while we listened to the soft, indefinite voices of one of the "Aunties" telling us something wonderful, mysterious and but half understood of the lives of our ancestors who circled the seas of the world.

The women of the household and particularly the four unmarried daughters of Captain George were constantly busy with their household duties, as well as with church and neighborhood charities: the visiting at the houses of friends with their baskets of berries or fruits and rare or ordinary garden flowers from the home garden filled their days very fully. A few paragraphs from a letter of Lydia Nichols' of May 8, 1848, written to her sister Mary Jane, evidently on a rare visit away from home, gives an idea of the home occupations:

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*Charles Gray Nichols

"My dear Sister:

". . . What a beautiful day we have had for washing; the clothes are all dry and taken in, and Father has taken in the line; I washed fifty-six pieces, and got through about 18 minutes after 9: Mrs. Odell got through and went away just before 1: She washed over the meal room floor in addition to her usual work. After I had got through my washing I went over in North Salem some way beyond the schoolhouse on an errand, after which, I went down to the store with the pussy's victuals, and then went round to Baby Eveleth's for the society's basket, and home again, and called at Abby Osgood's on my way to have some work for her to do for the society, a lady having sent to us to make six little linen cambric shirts and two little drapes. I have half an hour longer to spend with you, but the thought that my time is limited, together with a little stump of a pen with which I am writing, will make my writing look worse than ever. You asked about Uncle Ben's will; we understand he left about 250,000 dollars, 50 thousand of which, he left to his wife outright, and two houses and furniture for her lifetime: 15 thousand to each of his children in trust, 5 hundred dollars for his children to dispose of in legacies, 6 thousand to some hospital, and 4 thousand to the farm school. Mother says "tell George his windfall will fall to the wind for ought she knows". I made twenty-one calls last Friday. You know what sort of calls I mean, at the shops, etc. . .

"Yours very affectionately,
L. R. N."

On another occasion Lydia wrote:

". . . In the afternoon after tea I went to Aunt Ropes' with some mulberries . . . Sarah had gone to Aunt Peirce's and was making bread and election cake, both of which were very nice; by the way, Lizzie is an excellent cook, I can assure you: She has made the bread ever since you have been gone, which has been very nice; her johnny cakes and gingerbread are elegant. Sarah sends her best love, and she longs to have you come home to eat some of her berries . . . She says Father's ball jacket is going . . . She has put it up in your closet, that you may give it a parting look. She says you will have lots of work to do when you get home, a jacket for Father, a vest for Charlie, and a mat: and I am leaving several jobs for you to do after you return; my shoes to

brush, hair to brush and wash, and several other things too numerous to particularize . . . Saturday A.M. carried Aunt Ropes some raspberries, Sunday A. M. walked up as far as the great tree; after tea carried Miss Purbeck a few of our garden raspberries, rested a while and then took a walk in the garden; Monday A.M. I felt very desirous to get in the clothes, but Maam Lizzie would not consent, so I went to walk again after tea, but first, wiped the tea things and helped fold the sheets, went up to the great tree, and on my way left some mulberries."

Life at 80 Federal Street appears to have been very full, both with family and friends. So Charlotte Peirce, writing a letter from Salem on April 18, 1863:

"Dear Aunt . . . I have been here four weeks and have had a very pleasant visit as I always do in Salem. I have been to three large parties — and Mary Dodge's wedding visit. She was married three weeks ago, went to housekeeping in the Block. She accompanied her husband to New York either yesterday or the day before, but she will have to return alone for he expects to sail immediately. Mary Leach made several of her wedding dresses. She was married in a plain white satin trimmed with blonde gause. Thus ends Warren Street news, and now for Chestnut Street.

". . . The Crowninshields have returned in dark and low-crowned light-colored silk bonnets. The shops are full of patch-colored calicos . . .

". . . Grandma (Betsey) now seems perfectly well, and I have never seen Grandpa in better health or spirits. And now, let us take a view, a retrospective one, of Cambridge . . . Ben at home passing a vacation of six weeks. Charles has written me several funny letters. . . Ma has taken a part in the new Meeting House. She is very fond of Mr. Holman. She is not so much acquainted with Mr. Adams, his colleague, but I have heard her speak well of his preaching. We still go to the chapel. Dr. Ware continues to preach sensible discourses, as Pa says. This winter we have had many lectures in Cambridge. One course in Holden Chapel delivered by the Professors and Judge Story, and the two last Dr. Warren. His subject was 'the nerves' and his lectures very interesting."

Not only the needful or casual occupations of every day now occupied the family of Captain George Nichols and his wife Betsey, once

more established in the family home at 80 Federal Street: The traditional holidays were regularly and importantly celebrated.

For these occasions the absent families returned from New York, where the John Nichols family had established, and especially from Cambridge, where the descendants of the Peirce family were living and where the family of George Nichols, Jr. were now large in number and always most loyal to the Salem homestead and all that it meant: Mrs. George Nichols, Jr. (Susan Treadwell) gave frequent expression to her enjoyment of these family gatherings, and all that went on there. We quote from her letters and reminiscences. In the following letter from Mrs. George Nichols, Jr. we have a full description of a Fourth of July birthday:

"Being here with Hattie I feel disposed this morning to write a short account of our celebration yesterday of dear father Nichols' 84th birthday. The day was so fine and the enjoyment of it so undisturbed that it seemed to be altogether the most successful of these happy occasions, which have been repeated now for nearly twenty years — increasing in Magnitude and interest as the numbers of the family and their various elements and associations has been brought to bear upon it — and greeted with more and more grateful rejoicings at the continued blessing of the protracted years of the dear heads of the family. When father Nichols was seventy years old, the three score years and ten of Bible limit, we had quite a gay occasion — made merry by young voices and gifts from youthful fingers — and rhyms appropriate, if not practical.

"Since then dear father has been at times such an invalid that when we have gathered around him on his returning birthdays it has been often with an undefined impulse in that the glad occasion would never be repeated. — but — through the mercy of God his valued life has been then far prolonged, and now, on his 84th birthday he appears to be as bright — to say the least as he has for many years, and looked among his 37 guests as if he entered into their enjoyment fully. — He and dear Mother sat-side by side as in their usual custom at the middle of the long table spread in the large East room of the Spacious house on Federal Street — built by his wife's father (Mr. J. Peirce) seventy eight years ago. — The walls hung with some family portraits and the table adorned with beautiful flowers. Mama sat at father's right — looking as sweet and gentle as she always does — next her sat —

her dear neice, E. Peirce from Cambridge, and next her brother Mr. Henry Peirce and his wife. — At the foot of the table sat — Mr. Henry Nichols and his wife, who are passing the Summer here — Anna's health being quite delicate next — Mrs. George Nichols, Jr. — Near her sister Lydia — the Ministers at large of Salem, whose head and hands are always busy with the wants of the poor and the afflicted, but — still ready ever to serve the more fortunate and joyous ones. — Elisabeth next — the efficient manager and controller of all the domestic machinery of the establishment aided by her active and able co-worker and near neighbour at the table, Mary Jane whose benevolent eye and ready smile reflects back every thing that is bright and pleasant — but who quietly ignores and does not hear anything that is disagreeable. — Between these two sisters sat Charles whose duty it was to Carve one dish Pig. — Piggy being cooked whole, and for convenience placed on two dishes.

"George, the oldest Son, had a washed turkey placed before him. At his right sat — his sister Sarah — who should have been treated with great deference on account of years and high Church proclivities but — notwithstanding these claims to consideration she was annoyed rather than gratified unceasing — of her two brothers to secure for her the nicest tidbits — Perhaps she would not have objected so much if the 'Pigs' tail had been the 'Pope's nose' but — John, at her right carving the other part of the Pig quite insisted on bestowing that rare article upon Sarah's plate. Mrs. Very and her bright — Son Frank ate on that end of the table, and it was curious to observe the amused, wondering eyes of the little boy and the answering glances of his happy mother as each new joke excited the hilarity of the pleased guests.

"Next — Mrs. John Nichols elegently dressed, and radient with health and good nature was quite the belle of the long table. At her right sat Mrs. Haskell the wife of the lately settled clergyman of Barton Square Church, who himself sat — at father's left: — and so completes the circle around the long table. — Beyond that was another but — *shorter* long table at the head of which sat — Mrs. Charles Nichols and her little birdie the family baby — so lovely that we almost wish we might — have such a baby always. Little Katie is three years old — fat and fair and cunning as she can be. — At that table sat Augusta, Martha, Lottie, Hattie, Lillie, Fernie — the oldest grandson and promising representative of this generation and their young friends

Miss Elisa ..... from Brooklyn and Julia and .... who have been writing us at Cambridge. The addition of this trio added much grace and beauty to the occasion and quite confirmed my opinion that the ease and enjoyment — of a family gathering are quite enhanced by the addition of some foreign but not — adverse elements. A small round table accomodated ....., Mary, Harry, Ellen — and after the company was duly arranged, and a blessing was invoked by Rv. Mr. Haskell we began to discuss the chicken, pie, and Turkey and Pig which with the addition of ..... were abundantly sufficient — to satisfy all the craving for mere creature conforts. After a while, Lydia who is always Toast-Master announced the family toast — 'Duty to Sir and Ma'm, Respects to Uncles Aunts and Cousins — and health to myself — All our friends, present and absent' — 'Success to McLellan Death to Jeff Davis' — This last was not — from peace-loving Lydia's lips. — Mrs. Geo. Chase whose husband is abroad for his health with her little Son Arthur, a splendid boy of four years, joined us at dessert — which was enlivened by the singing of some patriotic and other songs made effective by the sweet voices of our New York friends.

"Dear Mother who had retired for rest was drawn down stairs again by the touching strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' and about 3 o'clock the company adjourned. from the tables to the Parlor, garden and hall. — Mr. & Mrs. Haskell — Mr. Nichols and Miss Peirce left before tea — after which Sarah, John and Lydia gave us the old ..... songs of 'Sweet William' 'Twelve days of Christmas' in the old style, and the Irelands again lent us their voices in the new. Soon however the ardent spirits of the younger guests refused to be shut up, even in the great hall as we call it, and popped off on top of the house in the most extatic style as was witnessed by ourselves on the opposite pavement, and sundry collections of people and delaying wagons, which were passing by. — We had just previously admired from the garden the graceful approach of a baloon and dear Mama who had made a last retreat to the bedroom hearing the music above — concluded that the baloon was about descending into our midst, and hearing the pebbles rolling from the top of the house, disturbed by the time keeping of feet of the patriotic singers — she was afraid to put her head out of the window to see the baloon — lest some of the thrown off ballast should give her a knock equal to a shot from the rebels. Gradually the sweet sounds subsided into low murmurs, the waving handkerchiefs

were tied round the throats of the fair singers and the party silently dwindled away leaving me sitting by the gas light in the Hall awaiting the return of Harriet who escorted by Mr. Kinsman had accompanied her friends home to Chestnut St. The day outside was unusually quiet and free from startling noises. The bells were rung."

An interesting congratulatory letter written to George Nichols on the occasion of this 84th birthday follows:

"Salem, July 4, 1862

"Respected Sir:

"I must congratulate you on the return of another Fourth of July. I wish it were my privilege to shake you by the hand to-day, but as I cannot I will drink a bumper to the surviving members of the Old Salem Assemblies. I don't know if you are aware of it, but you are the only survivor of the original stockholders. Of the ladies who usually attended your assemblies there are yet a number. That is easily accounted for — for the rule allowed two ladies to one gentleman.

"It may be interesting to you for me to name a few of the survivors, Mrs. Judge Putnam, Mrs. Benj. Peirce, Miss Rollins Pickman, Mrs. Eliza White, Mrs. John Forrester, your Lady, and a number of others. Mrs. Derby was the last deceased of that number. They took most lively interest in the assemblies and she did to the very last. About three months before she died, in conversation with her, she told me how she regretted that the Assemblies were broken up. That was the hall of refinement and national enjoyment. Oh, said she how Mrs. Rebecca Cabot and I loved to dance. Old associations will arise. I am going back and it must have been in the fall of 1802, the first time I saw you to know who you were, was alongside the little ship Active fitting for the East Indies.

"We laid our brig Washington fitting at the same time on the south side wharf. Those were the days of King Derby, Gerathman Peirce, and one Phillips Nichols Hodges and many others. I must name some of the noble Ships (*Friendship*) *Hazard Washington.* But the *Active* stood with the three named above as a superior sailor. If my memory serves me right the *Friendship* made a voyage to the Spanish Main in 90 days, discharged and took in cargo and arrived in Salem making a thousand dollars a day during her absence. However those days are gone by and those princely merchants are no more and but few survive. I will thank you to accept not for its value the Raspberry Brandy

to sprinkle the Strawberries with. The old Burgundy you dispose of it as you please. Give my best regards to George Nichols Esq. —

(Signed) John Redmond

After the death of Captain George in 1865, his four spinster daughters, Sarah, Lydia, Mary Jane and Lizzie, lived on in the house, their inheritance, until the last to go, Mary Jane, died in the year 1902. The four elderly sisters, known as the "Aunties," lived entirely for their nephews, nieces, cousins and family friends. They became with the years white-haired and gentle old ladies who kept the house door hospitably open for any who should visit them there, and followed in thought and love the absent ones wherever they might be, keeping the traditional dates of family birthdays and anniversaries ever in remembrance. The eldest daughter Sarah, however, although making many sacrifices in her life for her family, such as care of them in illness, had definitely a will and a way of her own, even to the point of being often thought eccentric.

SARAH

Sarah, the child born to Sally and George during George's continued absence on his last voyage, arrived several months before her father's return to the home port of Salem on July 15, 1804.

George had been absent at sea on this last voyage for eleven months, and Sally's diary telling of their second parting after a return visit of her young husband reflects true anguish at the new separation. Her diary reflects much melancholy and ill health up to the time of her discontinuing her writing altogether in November of 1803, and that she had an anxious and most uncomfortable pregnancy we may well surmise, and her husband George states that his young wife had been dangerously ill at the birth of her first child.

Whether or not the ill-health and nervous affliction of Sarah were occasioned by her mother's ill health and anxiety in the months before her birth, we cannot, of course, be certain, but it may well seem probable that this was the case. In any event, from the time we learn of Sarah in the family letters, she is an invalid, — afflicted with what was known as the "Tic-Douloureux". While this was the name given to Sally's ailment, her sickness was also referred to as mysterious and misunderstood. It is most often and most fully referred to in the letters of her younger brother, George, Jr., five years Sally's junior. A sensitive and affectionate boy, his letters and diary show him to have been

deeply affected by Sally's illness and suffering. On Tuesday, February 24, 1824, when Sally would have been twenty years of age, George writes in his diary:

". . . Our apprehensions concerning Sally are again serious. For these two or three nights she has had but very little sleep, and the oppresions, fainting at stomach, agitations of the nerves, etc. have again returned . . . but in a P.S. to Monday 23d, it has excited much surprise amongst us that Sally, who has, for months, been wholly speechless, should have been able, last night, to speak nearly loud, when she *was asleep*. The effort was so great, however, as to awaken her immediately. And what is still more surprising is, that although she afterwards tried to speak to the utmost of her power, still, no sound could be heard proceeding from her lips."

For the next four years this younger brother's diary with all its interesting entries is constantly interrupted by distressed accounts of Sarah's illness, and for which numerous "cures" were attempted: One of these was her removal to Cambridge by her parents, advised to maintain her away from home. George was attending Harvard at this time, and evidently saw his sister frequently, and was often begged to do so by the anxious parents in Salem. During this period Sally's health evidently improved to a certain extent.

In the year 1828 when Sarah would have been 24 years old her doctor urged her to take a sleigh-ride with him. Apparently this ride in itself was an unusual undertaking for the invalid, and that she was able to attempt it at all was a sign of improvement in her health and strength. However, when they had driven several miles from town the doctor's whip with which he controlled the horses fell out of the sleigh to the evident surprise and consternation of the driver: "I must ask you to get out and pick up the whip for me, Miss Sarah", he said decidedly. "For it would be dangerous for me to get out and leave the sleigh with you in it — the horses might run."

Sarah remonstrated at this request, claiming she did not have the strength. . . but being persuaded by her physician that he felt she could do it in this emergency, she descended gingerly to the road, picked up the whip and handed it to the driver, — but before she could mount to her seat in the sleigh again, the doctor had whipped up the horses, and left Sarah alone on the snowy road to walk the several miles back to town!

What was the surprised girl's reaction we do not know, but the important ending of this little story is that Sarah found she could walk the several miles home, and that ever after on each day of her life, which extended for fifty years more, she walked many miles; the usual number being twenty miles per day which, however, her carefully kept records show was reduced to five miles daily in the last month of her life when in the year 1879 she would have been seventy-four years old!

Sarah's steps were confined to the familiar streets of her home town, Salem, or in bad weather to circling the roof or Captain's Walk, or even the large vacant upper chambers of the house on Federal Street.

One is led to conjecture on the true nature of the illness of this eccentric girl which appears to have been halted by the incident and shock of the sleigh ride, and so released her life into fairly normal channels and activities. She developed also a great interest and success in home gardening, and a new and unselfish outlet in an especial interest in the poor and sick to whom she regularly distributed the berries, flowers and other fruits of her gardening on Federal Street.

Our collection includes a number of long and charming letters from Sarah to friends, or to her family who resided in New York. A letter to her brother John, written evidently at the end of his New York sojourn, reveals that Sarah had visited the New York family (the only record of her ever having gone from home since her invalid days in Cambridge) and that she had evidently enjoyed the great city:

"My dear brother I take my pen this stormy afternoon, to have a little talk with you all. So you have sold your house, and I am glad for your sake, as it needed to have a great deal done, and then it was too large, and was quite a care . . . But it was such a beautiful situation, that I regretted it on that account; there was no house in New York that I thought was quite equal, in every respect to yours, but it is of little importance to me, as I shall probably never see your good City again. Now, dear John, what do you think of removing to Salem again? it would make many hearts glad. I'm sure it would mine. We have got lots of nice houses here; think of it, will you not. I hope it will not be long before we shall see you all at No. 80 Federal Street . . ."

A friend, Eliza Chase, who traveled in Europe, wrote long letters of her travels home to Sarah; for our family chronicle are the inquiries for the homely details of Sarah's life in Salem: "Is your garden all in

order now? I can imagine seeing Mr. Ainsworth caring for it" (Calvin Ainsworth married to Sarah's sister Elizabeth). And "does the eagle still come down in your yard for water when he hears the clock strike twelve?" This "eagle," the famous gilded bird, an unusual and fine specimen of architect McIntire's carving which, but for this imaginative flight likely invented by Sarah, never left his permanent perch!

Another letter to Sarah from a Salem friend is quoted below:

"I wish my limbs would permit me to call and thank thee for those exquisite snowdrops, the beautiful shaded geranium leaves, and tasteful myrtle, making such a lovely nosegay so nicely arranged that each and every leaf has its own place and meaning . . .

". . . very soon now spring will be here with her hands full of blossoms and birds — and may we, dear Sarah, once again delight ourselves with the gentle whisperings of the seas, and the song of birds on the summer air . . .

"It gives me pleasure again and again to thank thee for thy oft-recurring kindnesses . . . Your family all seem to me to have hearts, so at leisure from themselves, that they can soothe and symphathyze with others in a very uncommon degree . . ."

Many other letters attest to Sarah's growing of berries, — thimble berries, strawberries, blackberries, and currants in the home garden of Federal Street, and her distribution of these fruits of her industry in countless neighborhood visits and constant attention to the sick and needy.

Not content with the mere achievement of her daily mileage, Sarah kept an exact account of it each year. In all it is easy to calculate from these pages that Sarah must have walked in her fifty years very many times the distance of the earth's circumference, or the miles traveled on her family's globe-circling voyages!

What strange sub-conscious hidden disturbance may this girl have inherited from the anxieties of her confined young mother? We may even wonder, "was not Sarah haunted?" Haunted perhaps by the spirit of her roving and sea-faring ancestors, finding relief at length after her years of illness and misunderstood frustration in this strange outlet for her own sub-consciously roving spirit. Sarah became a worn and shabby old woman, known by those who, like herself, walked the streets of Salem — the early risers, the poor who knew her benefits.

Like the witch Susanna she had her own hidden power. She was a worthy descendant who kept her own way and her own words, and had followed fearlessly the path she saw directly before her; moreover she was the granddaughter of Captain Ichabod, the daughter of Captain George, and in these days of the decline of the great days of Salem, and the disappearance of their sails on the high seas, she, Sarah Nichols, their granddaughter had yet within her the strength, the pride and the will to have measured with her own feet many times the distances which their ships had covered.

In the Salem *Gazette* in 1879 there is the following notice:

"Miss Sarah Nichols, a lady noted for her many acts of philanthrophy and Christian benevolence died at Salem on Saturday morning after a brief illness at the age of 74. The appearance of Miss Sarah Nichols, . . . was familiar with most of the early risers who for the last fifty years have met her in their walks. She commenced her walks for the benefit of her health in 1828, and continued the habit until the end of 1878. In that period she walked 149,072 miles — beginning with 20 miles a day, and reducing the distance, until the last month of her life, when she walked five miles a day.

" . . . On rainy days she paced up and down a barn floor . . .

". . . She always got the first mayflowers, and the fruits of her gathering went to brighten some sick room. The aggregate distance she traveled is great enough to compass the earth several times. Deceased was a faithful member and a constant attendant of St. Peter's Episcopal Church."

But the quiet home life of the Salem Aunties must often have been enlivened. Their gay young niece, Mary Nichols, in town with them for the Salem Assembly of the year 1867 wrote home to her sister as follows:

". . . The Assembly too proved to be a decided success. They are excellently managed, have every other dance a waltz or galop, very nice supper — in short, are quite like parties anywhere else. I have strong reasons to believe that Salem will be almost civilized. The gentlemen certainly are wonderfully improved; you will agree with me in thinking there was room for it . . . You must not wear your hair in rolls anymore, but fix it in a heavy braid at the back of your head. Buy a skein and a half of yarn, cut it twice and use it for a rat, it makes the braid larger and handsomer. I arrange my hair so, and like

it. You can buy hair rats, but they are expensive and yarn is just as good . . ."

And in March young Mary was still in Salem, and wrote again: ". . . I wish you could have seen our dresses . . . They were made very long and gored with six rows of puffings around the bottom. The upper skirt came to the top of these, and was trimmed with a ruching of the same. Between the puffings on the skirt and all the other ruches were ends of narrow black ribbon, giving the whole somewhat the effect of ermine . . . We did not get them torn, but they are tossed on a bed upstairs with most of their freshness danced out of them . . . Last Friday Carl Rosa and Birgneli gave a concert here . . . Parepa of course was magnificent. What a funny little man Cary Rosa is to be her husband. Rather too diminutive to embrace her easily one would imagine . . ."

Of course the young visitor Mary Nichols from Cambridge, lingered on with the "Aunties." Later in the month of March, 1867, Booth was in town. A girl friend, Sophye Ward, reported that she had glimpsed the "devine profile" in the horsecars, and had almost fainted! This set off a rash of romantic pursuit for another glimpse by Sophye and the Salem girls, but evidently young Mary was not so fortunate, or else the demure Aunties kept her under lock and key at home. In any case, Mary's next comments concerning the great romantic actor are somewhat disappointing. In a letter of March 24th she merely wrote: ". . . I saw by last night's paper that the Winter Garden was burned, and that Booth had lost his wardrobe . . ."

But on another visit to the Aunties two years later Mary, the gay little niece from Cambridge, was rewarded by this experience. ". . . I went into the Boston Theatre the other night to see Jefferson play *Rip Van Winkle*. I believe he has gone to New York now, and if you haven't seen him, I'd advise you to do so, for he is really the most exquisite actor I ever saw in my life. We had seats right in front, so could see every expression of his face, and it really is wonderful to see anyone so perfect in every detail. I think he is far finer than Booth . . ."

As the years went on the family letters showed a growing concern for the Salem "Aunties". "They are growing more frail with each year" — the sole surviving members of this particular generation, three old women with little purpose except to love and be loved by

the succeeding generations moving South and West. There are many tributes to the love and reverence in which the absent members of the family held them. So their cousin Joseph Ropes wrote on a Christmas morning to his "Dear Federal Street Cousins: It is pleasant to feel that this tender relationship which began with our earliest years, is not diminished, but strengthened as we advance in life. I write to thank you especially for Lydia's much prized note assuring me of your warm love for me and mine which is fully reciprocated."

The devoted sister-in-law, Susan, wrote in 1890 from her home in Cambridge, where she had apparently just received a photograph of the three remaining sisters:

"Precious sisters, How kind you were to give us such a pleasant surprise as the sight of your dear faces this morning, so peaceful and loving as they are and always have been, so dear to us all! We thank you with all our hearts for sending them to me, and giving me the opportunity of seeing how you look *just now*. I am so thankful *now* for our intercourse which has always been such a loving and cheerful one. Your ever affectionate sister, Susan."

Their niece Charlotte Elizabeth Peirce, on a last visit from her home in Cambridge wrote:

". . . Now we are all so changed at the old family mansion the dear ever hospitable Aunts are so altered yet still doing all they can to make the home cheerful & keeping the house as neat and nice as ever. And Lydia tho infirm in many ways keeps her mind bright & does most of the writing for the family & poor Aunt Lizzie is *cheerful* always. It is painful to see a whole family so fading out . . ."

Lydia, who had long been frail, was the first to go after Sarah, the eldest, in 1879.

In December of 1897 we find the devoted nephew, Harry Peirce-Nichols writing from his *rector's residence* of St. Mark's, in Minneapolis:

"My dear Aunt Mary:

I send you my loving sympathy in your great loneliness, the last of the dear band of sisters . . . I think of Aunt Lizzie as welcoming my daily call in the upstairs sewing room, as reading to Grandpa after supper, while I took in the news, she with her stocking; as so ready

for the jest and the quip; as gay in eagerness to work for the poor and the church; as sunshine always."

And a last letter from the ever devoted nephew in his parish far away from Salem:

'November 28, 1899 '

My dear Aunt Mary:

My heart goes out to you in the dear old house these Thanksgiving days. It is good to think of you as well and peaceful these days, keeping up the old brightness with which you ever greeted us in the happy times long gone. We can never be other than blessed by those happy times, and must try to reproduce their gladness for the generations to come. I am old fashioned enough to like everything just as it was at Grandpa's and the Aunts, nothing more and nothing less. Alice humors my desires in oysters; turkey; cranberry sauce; potato, squash and onions; three kinds of pie; baked plum pudding, nuts and raisins; small fruits; cider; "duty to sir and ma'am;" etc. Alas! we cannot have Glot Morceau pears, with "Now, George, you must try a bit of each kind of fruit from the garden" . . .

With the passing of the "Aunties," the house at 80 Federal Street became, through their bequest, the inheritance and home, of the next generation of unmarried women the three daughters of John Henry — in Martha Nichols' romantic naming, "The Maidens." In this generation were Augusta, Martha and Charlotte Nichols.

"They took into their big, warm hearts the poor, the sick, the sorrowing . . . but they were left three maidens of the fourth generation, still true to the family tradition . . . 'if someone would only come and share the house with us,' they said, 'elderly people like ourselves, sober and sedate, fond of books and a quiet life'." They decided that they would not admit anyone with children, especially if they were boys. They had a feeling that when boys were in the house, they were perpetually sliding down banisters, a theory fostered by the experience with the small brother of their childhood. "The old stairs could surely not stand it now," said one of the ladies, shaking her head wisely, "they are too delicate, poor, dear things" — unconsciously transferring to the house, as older people do, the tender solicitude which they would have given to their family members.

The three were lonely, and their loneliness had begun to engender

thoughts even foreign to their practical and devoted lives. They had begun to wonder dreamily what was left to them in life as their very strength and courage ebbed.

At last on a beautiful September day the unexpected happened. A young woman appeared at the door and asked to be admitted to their home. She was bright, young and full of enthusiasm . . . a baby boy not quite a year old was in her arms. As the maidens listened, their objections to a boy in the house vanished like dew before the sun . . . Later in the gray twilight of a gray October day, the tired young mother arrived with her baby, seemingly the ideal child, with rosy cheeks, golden hair, and his big, blue eyes looking out wonderingly in a strange new world . . . But the wise, gray sisters watching him recognized in him many happy summers and renewed Thanksgivings in the old parlor . . . in this unknown child, come unexpectedly to their door, was their old world renewed as though by a miraculous new birth and a happy vision of the future.

The years passed — inevitably the three Maidens approached their last years. In July, 1916, Martha received a letter from a friend in New York as tribute to her sister, Augusta, who had recently died.

"She had lived a brave, simple, strong life . . . I recall how she enjoyed reading Emerson aloud to me, and what wise comments she would make from time to time. She was of Emerson's plain living, high thinking sort, and she was a natural element in her beautiful old-time garden. I shall always associate her with sweet old-fashioned flowers."

And another close friend, the distinguished writer, Agnes Repplier, who had visited and written her books and articles throughout several peaceful summers with the Misses Nichols on Federal Street, wrote:

". . . Your letter brought so vividly before my eyes the image of the dear little lady working every morning last summer in her garden, and then coming down to the noon-day dinner all bathed and fresh in her shiny white dress; and not a hair out of order. She always reminded me of Mrs. Wister's pet axiom, 'Neatness is the coquetry of old age'."

Augusta's younger sister, Martha, occupied a number of years at the old house in preparation and publication of a book, *The Autobi-*

ography of George Nichols, Salem Captain and Merchant, based on the dictation of her Grandfather Captain George Nichols. The book was published in 1916 and elicited much interest and many favorable comments, not only from the family but from a reading public far beyond.

Among those most interested in the life of the "cousins" on Federal Street, was John White Treadwell Nichols of New York. He had corresponded with Martha enthusiastically for several years prior to her publication of *The Autobiography.* Once this was published, the enthusiastic and forward-looking New York relative began to plan with the Salem cousins for eventual disposal of the old family mansion on Federal Street; Augusta, Martha and Charlotte were clearly the last to inherit it. The large and handsome house had outgrown its usefulness as just a family home. A plan was therefore evolved in consultation with various friends both in New York and Salem for the purchase of the house from the Misses Nichols, with the understanding that at their deaths it should pass to the ownership and care of Salem's Essex Institute.

In a letter to her cousin, John W. T. Nichols in New York, written in 1918, Martha wrote:

". . . It is my privilege to remember the joy following the announcement of your birth, the first son after six daughters, and I always felt that the joy in your mother's heart deepened with each succeeding year . . .

"I should think you would look back on your life with keen satisfaction, and I hope for many years of happiness with your lovely wife and children and grandchildren whom you bless with your cheer and thoughtfulness.

"I received this morning your note regarding a serial article on *Old Salem Shipping Days* in the Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post . . . I will try to find these papers at the Public Library, as they must be very interesting . . ."

While a devoted New Yorker since his removal there with his family, John Nichols seems to have remained to the last deeply rooted in Salem. His letters to his cousins were congenial and frequent, and always concerned with some historical family matter.

And so it was that on the death of the last of the family to have

ownership in the house, at 80 Federal Street, Miss Charlotte Nichols, who died in 1935, the house passed to museum ownership; too handsome and costly to be kept in private ownership; still this house at 80 Federal Street in Salem, Massachusetts, built by Jerathmiel Peirce in 1882 and designed by Samuel McIntire, may set its own signature to its own story: it is the proud signature of intrinsic beauty and, no less, of service to a continuing family for almost 200 years.

ENVOI

In autumn and winter one can still look far out over the river from the upper floor of the mansion. But today the river is, even when the sun is on it, but a thin silvered strip in the distance. The gray leaden sky hangs over the gray river in autumnal mood and scene. Summer having stripped away the leaves, the mellow softening atmosphere of half-concealment is gone, and here before our eyes is the stark truth: the gray North River has no sails, no boats of any size or account on it today. Here is the filled-in ugly land of railroad tracks; yet on all this, still, the beautiful house rises like a lone sail; again we may fancy it looking out of its many windows down on this latter-day, sadly, resignedly.

The mood of this house is autumn. On the late November visit to the garden, the faithful "Sweet-William" is found still in blossom, shyly but loyally in the low beds beside the door, reminiscent of the ballad "Sweet-William and Gentle Rose-Marie" as it was sung many years ago by a deck-hand from Down East to Captain George, to brighten a long and difficult sea voyage. It is but one of those striking associations come upon surprisedly, which bids one listen; and as I listen suddenly, piercing, above the hubbub of surrounding traffic, sounds shrill and clear the cry of a lone seagull over the town. Yes, in spite of the years and their changes, the sea is near!

XIV

AROUND THE CORNER — 37 CHESTNUT STREET

THERE IS ANOTHER storied Nichols House in Salem — at 37 Chestnut Street:

Captain George Nichols, who had so important a role in the "housewarming" at 80 Federal Street when he had married the daughter of the house, Sally Peirce on that eventful day of November 1801, in 1811 bought land on Chestnut Street around the corner on which to erect his own house and home. But he did not start the building of the handsome brick house until after the War of 1812. He had waited long and patiently, and indeed through disastrous days for the shipping industry, but finally his own hour had come.

Captain George watched every detail of the erection of his house, even observing the workmen with great interest until they reached the top of the chimneys, when he said, "Now you may cheat as much as you please."

There was no architect for the house, but it was built by Jabez Smith at a cost of $13,500. The wallpapers were selected in Europe by George's younger brother Henry; there was not enough paper for the East Parlor, and Mr. Nichols' cousin George Ropes, who was deaf and dumb, but had a fine reputation as an artist, supplied the deficiency by painting on the wall; this was done so skillfully that the difference was never noticed.*

In the autumn of 1816 George Nichols moved into his new home with his wife and seven children. On Christmas Eve 1819 his fourth son and youngest child was born there, named for Charles Sanders, husband of his Aunt Charlotte Nichols. (The name Charles Sanders was to become famous one day by the bequest to Harvard of the Sanders fortune which should build Sanders Theater.)

In 1845 Charles Sanders Nichols married Amelia Ann Ainsworth, "joined in matrimony by the Reverend Mark Anthony DeWolfe Howe" a prominent Boston clergyman. Charles and "Amelioran," as she was ever known in the family, lived together for fifty-three years, many of which were spent in the Chestnut Street house, which Charles bought outright from his brother John in 1866.

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* Notes on the building of Chestnut Street by Richard Hall Wiswell, *Essex Institute Historical Collections* LXXV (July 1939)

The Nichols Ainsworth connection had several repetitions in the family. The Ainsworth family came from Vermont, where they had for several generations before this been prosperous "inland farmers," but their various descents at various times to the coast city of Salem and marriages there are an important item for this Nichols family and its chronicle. Two of Amelioran's sisters, the widowed Catherine Calista (known as Auntie Peirce)* and the spinster Martha Miranda eventually came to live with the Charles Nichols family.

The many brothers and sisters in this large Vermont family were known as the "alliterative Ainsworths": Catherine Calista married Henry, youngest son of Jerathmiel, who became the "second bookkeeper" of a large Boston bank. Catherine was far younger than Henry who courted her as a beautiful young girl when he was already regarded as a shy and confirmed old bachelor. The family story of his courtship tells that as he sat in church on Sunday the minister appeared to look directly at him as he preached his sermon, announcing as his text "Arise and go unto Bethel," and it was this direction which at length gave the shy suitor the courage to do as he was bidden and to fetch his bride from her home in Bethel, Vermont! In the Nichols family of her sister "Amelioran" Ainsworth Nichols, Catherine Calista Peirce known as "Auntie Peirce" was regarded as the prototype for Hawthorne's "Phoebe" in *The House of the Seven Gables.*

"Charles Nichols lived all his life in his birthplace Salem. His days were spent between his family home and his office on Washington Street, where he carried on the brokerage and insurance business started by old George when the family shipping interests collapsed. (Charles's brother, John Henry Nichols, was associated with Captain George and Charles, the youngest son, in this brokerage and insurance business for many years.) He undoubtedly felt strongly about the great crusade of his times but, having turned forty at the outbreak of the Civil War, and with four children to support, he did not participate. Instead he underwrote the expenses of a soldier to take his

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* Catherine Calista Ainsworth married Henry Peirce, youngest son of Jerathmiel Peirce. Calvin Ainsworth married Elizabeth Peirce Nichols (daughter of Captain George). There were no offspring from either marriage.

place, a fairly common practice in the North during the Civil War."*

The four children born to Charles and Amelia were Harry Peirce, Charles Fessenden, Ellen and Catherine. In contrast to his own seemingly inadventurous life, the sons of Charles appear to have reverted to the more usual and adventurous family characteristics. Harry Peirce prepared for the ministry after his graduation from Harvard, and had a distinguished career in the Episcopal Church, serving importantly and with outstanding popularity in parishes in Brunswick, Maine, then in Connecticut, Minnesota, and finally, for many years at Holy Trinity Church in New York City. His influence and character were strongly felt. He was in the best sense a "mixer," the life of every party, whether church or lay, and an outstanding storyteller. His family used to say that his friends were mainly "bishops or bellboys." He valued and relished particularly his contact with the college boys wherever he was placed: In Brunswick he made many contacts with Bowdoin College, in Connecticut with Yale, and in Minneapolis with the University of Minnesota. A number of his "boys" as the Reverend Harry Nichols called them became ministers. His nephew, the son of his brother Fessenden, has for many years occupied the Episcopal pulpit at Suffern, New York.

The younger son of Charles Sanders Nichols, Charles Fessenden, became a distinguished doctor of homeopathy in Boston, where he died suddenly in the midst of his active life and practice and was genuinely mourned and missed by a very large congregation of friends, among whom were Boston's elite, as well as lowly, for whom he had cared.

Outside of his successful and regular medical practice in Boston, Fessenden appears to have had a varied and adventurous life, much personal charm and temperament, and a rather outstanding literary ability. When he journeyed to the Hawaiian Islands, he made the acquaintance of the Hawaiian Queen, Liliu Kilani, and became personal physician to this last-reigning sovereign of the Islands.

Fessenden's facile pen contributed articles at various times to the leading magazines of his day — *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly.* But a most charming article, the one of greatest importance for Salem, "A Waxed Floor in Salem," contributed to the *Gazette* describes in

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* *Nichols Family of Salem, Massachusetts,* Lawrence Van. B. Nichols.

detail the dancing class under the famed Boston and Salem Dancing Master, Papanti. Fessenden attended this as a child in historic and beautiful Hamilton Hall, built by the architect McIntire and of which his grandfather, Captain George Nichols, was one of the founders in 1805. This article is so full of charming local color for the following Salem generations, many of whom to this day take their daughters to Hamilton Hall each June for their debut cotillion, that it seems worthy and suitable for quotation here:

A WAXED FLOOR IN SALEM
By CHARLES FESSENDEN NICHOLS

"EXHIBITION DAY in Hamilton Hall! It stands on the Street of the Beautiful Trees, proud of statesman's name and famed architect's construction; scene of early pomp — a Lafayette ball traditional, as if inserted in a jewelled frame. And indeed, Master Quicksilver, lurking behind the convex mirrors which overlook this vast hall, never forgets what dignity and beauty have been here reflected. And here are seated, in heirlooms clad, lining the circumference of the hall, people of approved ancestry, while the children dance, even as witches once danced.

"Not a Saltonstall but has promenaded here; and Lees gracile and Saxon-haired; and Endicott children rather tall and proud; and Peabodys, while it was still 'Peabody or nobody' in the haughty town; with Forresters, Pickerings, Curwens, Phillipses, Cabots, Bowditches, Derbys, Rantouls, Kings, Robinsons, and Silsbees; and Hawthorne children, Putnams, Uphams, Peirces, Storys, Footes, Devereaux, Wolcotts, Huntingtons, Dodges, Dalands, Gillises, Pingrees, Pickmans, Hodges, Nicholses, Wheatlands, Gardiners, Ropeses, Bertrams, Brookhouses and Wests.

"The children glide past, serious — in fear of misstepping — there is no coquetry, sisterly and brotherly are glances and encircling arms, and he who would fain know All believes that the profound bows made by these little folk — bows in bevies and battallions, and at claiming and relinquishing partners, feet placed at perfect and required angles — demand all brain forces.

"Yet, from time to time, a plash of bright sound, or little arms thrown upward, as if a fish dashed fins into the sunlight from an eddying pool.

"Two sorts of little girls, the big who overtop their jerking little partners, and the innumerable fairies, prettiest in pink. Two boy sorts, type of the born gentlemen, elastic and deferential, versus the boys blase or otherwise hopeless — aggressive, mean and pallid.

"I surmise that yonder matrons gently favor, in behalf of one or other little daughter, certain boys eligible, yet unaware.

"My little girl's face! Most bushed of all; she is neither too tall, nor a pink bubble. Whenever she is near she throws a loving look at me. It is her green ribband which, tied on this chairback, has reserved and fiercely defended a seat for papa.

"Here I danced. Ah! the admirations, heart-burnings, colds caught, feet pinched, slyness toward our famous dance-master who was old, and we were sure he stuffed his legs: Papanti himself, irritably obsequious, with record of duels, and Colonel Peabody's endorsement; marvelously skilful at fiddling while himself stepping deftly in measure. Phrases come to my memory: 'Allow me the pleasure.' 'Shall I have the German?' 'Very excusable.' Snatches suchlike are in this fanned air, and scent of oysters, and scent of oaken beams dusty and shaken by the dance. Hoof-tramping below, and the old family coachmen venture upstairs to look softly in upon their young masters. Now I seek an ancient anteroom, of mirrors time-dimmed and deep windows dilapidating the strains of the distant music. The child-waltz mutters, sobbing as if in a shroud. I could weep (the old days are very dear), but the attendant seems curiously attentive."

"These Nicholses were witty and full of fun" writes a family descendant of today, Margaret Nichols Hardenbergh: "I always think of Auntie Ellen as singing songs and collecting riddles. Her younger sister Catherine married a clergyman named Bartlett, and Ellen said she had gone to be 'half of a Bartlett pear.' Catherine died quite young . . ."

Again Charles's granddaughter Margaret Hardenbergh of Minneapolis, reminisces — "As a child my annual visit to Salem always included a call upon the 'Aunts' who lived in the (now) guide-starred and post-carded old Peirce mansion on Federal Street — Dad's voice seemed to soften as he stepped into that hall and told me to listen for the big clock to chime. The tiled pictures around the McIntire fire-

place* delighted me almost as much as Aunt Mary Jane's jumbles from the "east-cluzzit." And to think that the Aunts' Fourth o'July dinner should have been a roast suckling pig seemed almost as amazing as that great-grandfather Peirce should have had his lady-love's initials put on a tea service way over in China.**

"But all that was just a call — the real Salem visit was at gramper'n grammers on Chestnut Street . . ."

Charles Nichols's oldest daughter, Ellen Amelia, never married and seems strangely yet inevitably in her day and character to have continued that tradition of "the maidens" in the old house on Federal Street. For retiring from her active life in New York and elsewhere, mostly church work of various kinds, she evidently felt herself strangely drawn back to the old city of her birth and returned there to make her home with her cousins — the Misses Augusta, Martha and Charlotte Nichols, the last of the 'maidens.'

In returning to her birthplace, Salem, to spend her last years, Ellen Amelia Nichols had "felt I belonged there," and it would surely seem she did and that, outliving her cousins who had owned the old house on Federal Street, she became the very last of the "maidens" and was buried from her family's Grace Church where a devoted family following from near and far attended her last rites. One of these wrote suitably and symbolically:

OLD SALEM

She lies white and fair
Who was never a bride,
While no sail swells
With the rising tide
In Salem, City of Peace.
The church bell tolls through the busy town,
But she's laid out in her Sunday gown
In Salem, City of Peace.

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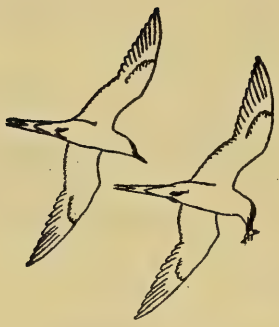
* These tiles represent Aesop's Fables and were captured as seafaring booty from a British vessel, the *Brutus,* in 1780 by John Leach. He was brother-in-law of Jerathmiel Peirce and presented the tiles to him. It is not known when they were installed.

** The "Peirce" tea set donated to 80 Federal Street by Ellen Amelia Nichols.

There's snow in the Churchyard
Ice on the Bar
The kinsfolk scatter
They all live far
From Salem, City of Peace.



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114	The final paragraph of this page--summarizing as it does the whole Chapter Saga of the Sea about the brothers, the first John and the first George--should be separated by several lines of space from the paragraphs above it, which refer to several later generations.
131	"Sarah Hardy" should read "Sarah Hardy Ropes."
238	". . . his mother (Sally Nichols)" should read ". . . (Lydia Nichols)."
near 368	Illustration. Caption should read "Ellen Nichols on the right, with Esther Hardenbergh."
near 368	Illustration West Parlor. George and Sally's Wedding actually took place in East Parlor.
395	For correct placing of undated letter, see Supplement III.
429	1882 should read 1782.

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